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PLO DENIES RESPONSIBILITY FOR CYPRUS INCIDENT

JN181941Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Text] In Beirut, the PLO today denied involvement in the death of Yusuf as-Siba'i and the seizure of hostages in Cyprus. The PLO official spokesman denounced this operation and stressed that the organization had nothing to do with it.

'ARAFAT SENDS CONDOLENCES TO AAPSO ON AS-SIBA'I DEATH

JN201811Y Voice of Palestine [Clandestine] in Arabic to the Arab World 1500 GMT 20 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Brother Abu 'Ammar, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and commander in chief of the forces of the revolution, today sent a message of condolences to the group in charge of the AAPSO conference on the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i, secretary general of the organization. The following is text of the message:

Brothers, members of AAPSO: While we were looking with great hope and confidence toward your conference [word indistinct] a triumph for the cause of our people and for the causes of liberation and solidarity among peoples of the Third World, we were surprised by the painful developments by which certain suspect criminals intended to [word indistinct] the aims of your conference from its objectives, by assassinating As-Siba'i, secretary general of your organization. This led to repercussions that resulted in much bloodshed.

Friends, this cowardly operation was aimed against the liberation movement of the peoples of the Third World and was an attempt to strike at AAPSO and defame the struggle of our Palestinian people to the strugglers and friends on Cypriot soil.

We all know that these hands are manipulated by the agent intelligence services of imperialism and Zionism which are implementing their evil objectives of striking at the struggle of our people and destroying their solidarity.

It was clear from these developments [words indistinct] and from the acts against the PLO delegation to your conference, that one of the aims of this suspect operation was to harm the struggle of our people.

For the peoples of Asia and Africa the issue of liberation is not [words indistinct] with the noble aims for which we are all fighting for [word indistinct] against Zionism, imperialism and colonialism.

Friends, we convey to you our sincerest condolences on the death of the secretary general of your organization. We also express our deep conviction in the inevitability of the success of our joint struggle. We believe that we will attain all our aims of liberation, progress and a just peace.

Our condolences to you, and victory for the solidarity of the people [words indistinct]. It is a revolution until victory.

[Signed] Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and commander in chief of the forces of the Palestinian revolution.

CYPRUS INCIDENT SAID TO SERVE AS-SADAT'S POLITICAL PURPOSES

JN202014Y Voice of Palestine [Clandestine] in Arabic to the Arab World 1520 GMT 20 Feb 78 JN

[Unattributed commentary]

[Excerpts] The PLO has denounced the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i and described the perpetrators as criminals and murderers who moved away from the line of the revolution and its honorable course of struggle.

The PLO did not denounce the assassination out of fear that there would be reactions from the official Egyptian side, but did so out of its principled rejection of this sort of rash and irresponsible act as well as its belief that the executers of this operation are after sinister and serious ends which undermine the cause of the Palestinian people and the struggle of their revolution more than they undermine an individual, regardless of his political weight [words indistinct] in the agent Egyptian regime.

The PLO denounced their rash and irresponsible operation because of its belief that confronting As-Sadat's capitulatory course cannot be achieved in this manner but rather through creating (?pan-Arab) factors which constitute the bases of a progressive national course which can prevent capitulation and relinquishment of rights and preserve the pan-Arab rights of the Arab nation. What is noteworthy and what calls for denunciation and surprise is the Egyptian regime's ugly and cheap exploitation of this operation, using it to mobilize the fraternal Egyptian people against the Palestinian people and their struggle while completely ignoring the PLO's stand which rejects and condemns this operation.

The assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i which was perpetrated by a handful of criminals who are not in the least related to the revolution, has given the Egyptian regime a chance to exploit it for political purposes. This helps As-Sadat wash his hands of the slogans he raised and used to cover his capitulatory course--slogans such as that of preserving Palestinian rights. The game the As-Sadat regime is playing as well as its cheap opportunist exploitation of this operation will not fool the masses of our Arab nation. It will not succeed in turning the fraternal Egyptian people against our people and revolution. To play with the emotions of the masses and exploit these emotions as a part of a capitulatory plan of relinquishment has become the favorite game of As-Sadat and his henchmen. They are using this game as a cover and justification for the biggest and most serious retraction by Arab Egypt from pan-Arab action. They are also using it as a justification for isolating Egypt from its pan-Arab tasks and restricting these tasks into a narrow regional framework with a foul odor of racism and factionalism [ash-shu'ubiyyah]. This is something which is alien to the people as well as to the history of Egypt.

The people of Palestine will remain faithful always and forever to the Arab people of Egypt and will consider them militant brothers in arms in the battles of Arab destiny. As-Sadat and his henchmen are trying to obliterate this fact and eliminate it from the conscience and feelings of the people of Egypt, but our trust in the Arab people of Egypt is great; moreover, our trust in the awakening of this people and their awareness of the painful facts is greater than As-Sadat and [words indistinct].

'ARAFAT PRESIDES OVER JOINT MILITARY COMMAND MEETING

JN181517Y Voice of Palestine [Clandestine] in Arabic to Arab World 1500 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Text] The joint military command of the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese Nationalist Movement held a meeting yesterday evening under brother Abu 'Ammar, PLO Executive Committee chairman and commander in chief of the Palestinian revolution forces. The meeting was attended by the commanders of the joint forces in southern Lebanon.

Our correspondent has learned that during the meeting the situation in the south was discussed in the wake of the serious military moves made by the Zionist-isolationist alliance, represented by taking up positions in some border villages and setting up fortifications, especially in areas where there are no joint forces. The joint military command also discussed the means of confronting this move, followed up the implementation of the measures guaranteeing the removal of drugs in the south and reviewed what has been accomplished.

ZIONIST-ISOLATIONIST MOVEMENTS IN S. LEBANON REPORTED

JN181523Y Voice of Palestine [Clandestine] in Arabic to Arab World 1500 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Reports received from southern Lebanon say that since the day before yesterday the Zionist-isolationist allance has been sending in large forces to the Lebanese border villages and is reinforcing and strengthening its forces and fortifications in the villages of Mis al-Jabal, Bulayda, 'Aytarun, and [name indistinct]. These movements are being made in areas where there are no forces of the Palestinian revolution or the Lebanese Nationalist Movement. The aim of these movements is to control these areas and to subjugate them politically, socially and economically to the Zionist-isolationlist policy.

PALESTINIANS CLAIM CREDIT FOR HEBREW UNIVERSITY EXPLOSION

JN201750Y Voice of Palestine [Clandestine] in Arabic to the Arab World 1500 GMT 20 Feb 78 JN

[Text] An unspecified number of the enemy were killed or wounded following the explosion of a time bomb planted by Palestinian revolutionaries working inside the occupied homeland. The explosive charge was placed in the main grounds of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The glass of some nearby buildings was shattered. This was announced by the military spokesman of the General Command of the Palestinian Revolution in a statement issued last night.

The statement says: According to instructions issued by the General Command of the Palestinian Revolution to our group working inside the occupied homeland to escalate military action against strategic military targets of the enemy, a special group [words indistinct] yesterday morning, 19 February 1978, according to the set plan and managed to plant time bombs in several places inside the building of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

At 1015 that same day, one of the explosives went off in the university's main grounds, causing a state of panic among the Zionist settlers who rushed to shelters.

The explosion killed or wounded an unspecified number of the enemy, and shattered the glass of nearby buildings. Soon after the explosion ambulances rushed to the scene and carried away the dead and wounded. In the meantime, the Zionist police completely evacuated and then encircled the university. They began a wide-scale search operation during which they discovered a bomb planted by our revolutionaries. This bomb was subsequently defused by the Zionist explosive experts who were summoned to the scene.

The occupation force set up roadblocks in the area around the university and immediately arrested many Palestinian citizens on the pretext of being connected with the bombing.

Our revolutionaries returned to their bases safely. The enemy radio admitted the operation yesterday afternoon, and claimed that only 11 persons were wounded.

'ARAFAT TO VISIT SOVIET UNION IN MARCH

JN181447Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1358 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Beirut, 18 February--The Palestinian news agency has announced that Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, will visit the Soviet Union early next month on an official invitation from the Soviet leaders. The agency said that 'Arafat received the official invitation when he met today with Soviet Ambassador in Beirut Aleksandr Soldatov.

ICATU HEAD BLAMES SYRIA FOR FAILURE OF KUWAIT CONFERENCE

JN181528Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1350 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 18 February--Mr 'Ali al-Mawla, secretary general of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU), has blamed the representatives of the Syrian regime for the failure of the special ICATU conference held in Kuwait last week. In a press conference in Baghdad today, the ICATU secretary general said that the delegation of the Syrian regime attempted to impose upon the conference certain decisions which suited the Syrian regime but did not represent the interests of the Arab working class and their unity of struggle. The secretary general added that the walkout staged by five Arab delegations, including that of Iraq, is a rejection of this Syrian behavior and a protest against the practices of certain Arab trade unions, particularly the Syrian trade union, at the conference.

Exposing the role of the Syrian trade union in aborting the conference, Mr al-Mawla said that the attempts to abort the conference preceded its meetings and there had been pre-planned groupings of some organizations to sabotage the proceedings. Mr al-Mawla said that a number of Arab trade unions, under pressure from the Syrian regime, declined to attend the confederation's central meeting and also the meetings of the heads of Arab trade union movements, which were convened by the confederation's general secretariat before the Kuwait conference in order to draft its agenda. This attitude, he said, was conveyed to the conference and contributed to creating confusion inside the conference, which led to its failure, as desired by the above-mentioned unions. Mr al-Mawla announced that the conference resolutions are not legal and that the current secretariat of the confederation will carry out its tasks in Baghdad as the representative of the Arab working class in light of the resolutions of the meetings of the central council of the confederation which were held in Tripoli last December.

EGYPT, SUDAN POSTPONE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

NC192100Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] A responsible source at the cabinet has stated that Prime Minister Mamduh Salim and Sudanese Vice President and Foreign Minister ar-Rashid at-Tahir have agreed to postpone the joint committee to study the establishment of the integrated area of the Egyptian-Sudanese border. The committee was to have convened early tomorrow in Aswan and Abu Sunbul. The meeting has been postponed until next week so that it will be possible to follow up on the present events.

The meetings of the Egyptian-Sudanese technical committees, which have been going on since last week, will continue in Aswan to prepare for the upcoming meeting.

KUWAIT

PAPERS CONDEMN ASSASSINATION OF YUSUF AS-SIBA'I

NC191100Y Doha QNA in Arabic 0812 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpts] Doha, 19 February--The news of the assassination in Cyprus yesterday of the AAPSO secretary general and chairman of the Cairo newspaper AL-AHRAM'S board of directors, Yusuf as-Siba'i, is reported in banner headlines and fills the front pages of the papers published in the Arab Gulf today. The papers also condemn and denounce the assassination in their commentaries.

In its commentary, the Kuwaiti newspaper AR-RA'Y AL-'AMM denounces the assassination and emphasizes that such an action will not liberate Palestine. It says: We do not want terrorism to be the identity of the Arab individual because the Palestinian question has a bigger identity, namely, the revolution. The paper calls on the members of the Palestinian revolution to rise to the level of the responsibility befitting the Arab cause.

Quoting sources it terms informed, the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-ANBA' says that 1 day before the convocation of the AAPSO conference in Nicosia the Soviet Union had asked that As-Siba'i be removed from his post and that the headquarters of the AAPSO secretariat general be transferred from Cairo to Cyprus.

AS-SIYASAH ON CONFINING SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN CONFRONTATION

NC191200Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1032 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Kuwait, 19 February--The Kuwaiti newspaper AS-SIYASAH reports today that a number of Arab states, including Egypt, Sudan and Saudi Arabia, are exerting special efforts to arrange a specific formula of understanding between Somalia and Ethiopia. The paper says that Saudi Arabia has recently carried out a diplomatic campaign with a number of the area's states aimed at drafting an initiative for direct Somali-Ethiopian contacts so as to avoid an increase in the danger of a military confrontation between them.

SA'D AL-'ABDALLAH AS-SALIM NAMED HEIR APPARENT

LD181111Y Kuwait Domestic Service in Arabic 1000 GMT 18 Feb 78 LD

[Summary] In a letter from the amir of Kuwait to the prime minister, the amir has nominated Sa'd al-'Abdallah as-Salim as his heir apparent. In his reply to the amir, the prime minister has informed the amir of the cabinet's agreement to the nomination. The amir has issued a decree appointing Sa'd al-'Abdallah as-Salim as his heir apparent.

QATAR

AL-'ARAB ON CARTER WARNING TO OIL-PRODUCING STATES

NC191026Y Doha QNA in Arabic 0854 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpts] Doha, 19 February--The Qatari newspaper Al-'ARAB has emphasized that the warning made yesterday by President Jimmy Carter to the oil-producing states regarding any oil ban on the United States is a serious matter and basically unjustified in view of its timing and the delicate conditions through which the international economy is passing.

Writing under the heading "Carter's Warning Is Strange and Unacceptable," the paper today says: President Carter makes his warning at a time when the oil-producing states are affirming their eagerness to bolster world economy and not to make any decision that would not serve the interest of the international economy, despite the fact that the major industrial states, including the United States, are defending the international economic speculations and backing their escalation.

In conclusion the paper affirms that there is one important truth which the Carter administration must not forget. It is that the oil states are the masters of their own fate, that Carter's warning will be rejected and that it does not frighten them but exposes the realities of the U.S. stand to the Third World, including the oil states.

SAUDI ARABIA

SOMALI MINISTER DISCUSSES TALKS WITH SAUDI OFFICIALS

LD1612187 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 18 Feb 78 LD

[Text] Omar Arteh Ghalib, the Somali minister of culture and higher education and adviser to President Siad Barre, called on the United States and the Western powers to reconsider their position towards the question of the (?Horn of Africa). In his statement to Al-BILAD published today, he also called on the Arab states to adopt a serious stand on the side of Somalia. Referring to the talks which he conducted with leading officials in the kingdom, he described them as (?serious) and said: I briefed the Saudi authorities on the course of events in the region and found in them every understanding.

UAE

PRESIDENT ZAYID RETURNS FROM VISIT TO PAKISTAN

NC191825Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1744 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 19 February--UAE President Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan returned to Abu Dhabi this evening after a private visit to Pakistan which began on 7 January. During his visit, Shaykh Zayid held discussions with the Pakistani Military Governor Gen Mohammad Ziaul Haq on issues of interest to their countries. Shaykh Zayid will initiate tomorrow a series of contacts with members of the UAE Supreme Council to discuss important domestic and Arab issues.

YEMEN--YAR

AL-GHASHMI SAYS YEMENI JEWS WELCOME BACK TO YEMEN

NC181203Y Doha QNA in Arabic 1050 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Kuwait, 18 February--YAR Command Council Chairman Ahmad Husayn al-Ghashmi has renewed his country's readiness to welcome the Yemeni Jews who had emigrated in the past. He said that Yemen has notified the international organizations of its wish that the Yemeni Jews return to their homeland soon.

In addition, Al-Ghashmi said in an interview published in AS-SIYASAH today that he is not contemplating visiting the PDRY at present but that he will visit it when the time is right. He indicated that he is against secession with the PDRY and that cooperation between the two countries does exist. AL-GHASHMI affirmed that his country's relations with Saudi Arabia are strong and firm.

MATERIALS ON CYPRUS ASSASSINATION, HIJACKING

MENA Report on Assassination

NC181214Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Nicosia, 18 February--The MENA correspondent in Nicosia reports that a number of terrorists attacked the Hilton Hotel in Nicosia, Cyprus, this morning, where the AAPSO meetings are being held, and they fired shots at Yusuf as-Siba'i, who died when he was taken to the hospital.

The correspondent says that the terrorist group is holding those present at the conference hall. These include two Egyptian journalists, Ahmad Baha' ad-Din and Husayn Fahmi. The group has threatened to blow up the hotel if the Egyptian ambassador, Hasan Shash, and a Cypriot official do not come to the hotel. The terrorist group has asked the Cypriot officials to bring a car and to guarantee their exit from Cyprus.

The correspondent adds that the terrorist group is also holding the PLO representative in Cyprus, Zakariya 'Abd ar-Rahim Abu Yahya, among the hostages. The correspondent has learned that the terrorist group includes four Africans, including one woman, who are members of the Eritrean Liberation Front.

The correspondent says that the terrorists attacked the hotel's coffee shop and took all those who were in it hostage. They then set all the hostages free except the Egyptians, the PLO representative, Zakariya 'Abd ar-Rahim and the Socialist Party leader, Lissaridhis.

After tying up the Egyptians with ropes, they asked that a car be brought to take them to the airport and to get a special plane ready to fly them out of Cyprus. Meanwhile, contacts are going on between the Cyprus interior minister, who went to the scene of the incident immediately, and some of the Arab ambassadors in Cyprus.

Cairo Radio Report

NC181325Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1305 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Ladies and gentlemen, we have now received the following:

News agencies have carried reports from Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, of an attack against Yusuf as-Siba'i while he was delivering his statement at the conference of the AAPSO Presidium. He was killed while defending human rights and the rights of the peoples of Asia and Africa to freedom, justice and dignity. The criminals carried out this attack after infiltrating among the conferees. Afterward they seized some of the conference members in an attempt to escape by relying on terrorism.

Prime Minister Mamduh Salim called a meeting of the ministers of information, culture and the interior and the minister of state for foreign affairs as soon as the incident took place. A statement will be issued on the incident soon.

MENA Cites INA Report

NC1811152Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1150 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 18 February--INA has reported that Yusuf as-Siba'i, the AAPSO secretary general and the chairman of the AL-AHRAM board of directors, has been assassinated at the Hilton Hotel in Nicosia, Cyprus, where the meetings of the AAPSO Presidium are being held.

INA, which carried the report minutes after it occurred, also carried details on the life of the late Yusuf as-Siba'i. The late As-Siba'i, who was also the doyen of the Egyptian journalists, was a member of the delegation which visited Jerusalem during the peace journey, and his membership in the Arab Journalists Union was terminated because of this. It should be recalled that the Arab rejection front has threatened to assassinate all those who participated in the peace journey.

Identity of Gunmen Reported

NC1814111Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1359 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpts] Nicosia, 18 February--The MENA correspondent has learned that the assassins of Yusuf as-Siba'i at the Nicosia Hilton this morning are a Palestinian and an Iraqi, both in their twenties. The correspondent has learned that the well-known Egyptian journalist Ahmad Baha' ad-Din is not among the hostages as was previously reported. The one who has been taken hostage is Kamil Baha' ad-Din of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture. Among the hostages are three Egyptian journalists--Bahij Nassar, Husayn Rizq and Edward Kharrat.

Two PLO officials are also among the hostages. They are [PLO official spokesman] 'Abd al-Muhsin Abu Mayzar and Zakariya 'Abd ar-Rahim [PLO representative in Nicosia], alias Abu Yahya. The terrorists and the hostages were taken in a bus to Larnaca airport, which is about 80 [as received] km from Nicosia. 'Aziz Sharif, secretary of the Iraqi Peace Council, asked to accompany the terrorists and hostages to the airport. The Egyptian ambassador in Nicosia, Hasan Shash, has left for Larnaca airport to follow the situation closely.

Egypt To Seek Extradition

NC1814271 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1341 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] We have received the following statement: Prime Minister Mamduh Salim has contacted the acting president of Cyprus and learned from him the details of the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i. He learned that the Cyprus authorities sent the Cyprus interior minister to the conference and that he was later detained, together with some members of the conference, by the culprits. From a later contact Salim learned that the aggressors requested a car to take them to the airport in Cyprus and that they took the Cyprus interior minister and some members of the conference presidium in it.

Prime Minister Mamduh Salim immediately called a meeting of the ministers of information, culture and interior and the minister of state for foreign affairs. It was decided during this meeting that the Egyptian authorities will ask the Cyprus authorities to reveal the identity and affiliations of the culprits and to hand them over to the Egyptian authorities so that they will be brought to trial to be punished for their abominable crime.

The Egyptian authorities, while reporting this cowardly treachery, which claimed the life of a martyr, who was one of Egypt's sons and who was among those who contributed most to the Arab nation and the Afro-Asian peoples, emphasize that this treachery will not go unpunished and that they will meet any attack on any Egyptian anywhere with the firmness such cowardly treachery deserves. This act is an indication of weakness, and those who commit or encourage or preach it are criminals against their peoples and all mankind.

The martyr, Yusuf as-Siba'i, was one of those involved in public work since his youth. He was the founder of AAPSO and the Afro-Asian Writers Federation. His contribution to the Arab cause is well known. The martyr had also occupied the post of information and culture minister and contributed to the progress of the information and cultural service. He will always be given credit for what he did in this field. He also held the post of chairman of the AL-AHRAM establishment and was elected the journalists' doyen.

May God have mercy on the departed martyr and may he give consolation to his readers, relatives and people who acknowledge his merits. President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat has decided to confer the Medal of the Republic on the martyr.

PDRY Delegation Released

NC1817482 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1708 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Nicosia, 18 February--MENA has learned that the two kidnapers have released the PDRY delegation and kept the other Arab hostages in addition to Dr Lissaridhis, who was allowed to leave the bus for a drink of water and then returned to the bus. The Cyprus authorities this evening sent a special plane to Beirut to bring some PLO leaders to negotiate with the kidnapers. Negotiations are continuing between the Cyprus foreign and interior ministers and the terrorists.

It should be recalled that the terrorists took the Cyprus interior minister hostage but later released him. The two terrorists are threatening to kill the hostages one by one if the Cyprus Government does not comply with their demand for a special plane to take them out of Cyprus.

The Cyprus authorities are still holding contacts with the terrorists pending the arrival of the plane which was sent to Beirut to bring some PLO leaders to negotiate with the kidnapers. The MENA correspondent has learned that the terrorists speak classical Arabic and are wearing expensive clothes. They told the hostages that they are Palestinian fedayeen serving the cause.

MENA has learned that an Egyptian delegation headed by Minister of Culture and Information 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi will arrive in Cyprus tonight to follow up on the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i and to accompany his body to Egypt. MENA has also learned that the Egyptian delegation will land at Akrotiri airport instead of Larnaca airport.

The MENA correspondent has learned that the hostages include (Othman Benan), the Moroccan delegate to the AAPSO conference; As-Sayyid Mughrabi, the Sudanese delegate, Sulayman Haddad, the Syrian military attache in Nicosia; 'Abd al-Muhsin Abu Mayzar, the PLO official spokesman; 'Abd ar-Razzaq Yahya, a PLO official; George Batal, a member of the Lebanese Communist Party; Dr Mustafa Murad and Mustafa Amin from Syria; and Mr (Colombo), head of the Somali delegation.

As-Sadat Expresses Regret

NC182002Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1930 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 18 February--President Anwar as-Sadat has expressed deep regret over the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i. He said that he suffered a deep shock when he heard of the assassination in Cyprus today of the late As-Siba'i. "He said that he suffered a deep shock when he heard of the assassination in Cyprus today of the late As-Siba'i. "He was my friend. Even more, he was a brother. He was like one of my brothers," said the president.

The president was speaking to newsmen as he left Cairo's Imam al-Husayn Mosque this evening after having attended a ceremony marking the Prophet's birthday. Answering questions by newsmen, the president added that he cannot make accusations against anybody because he has not yet been briefed on the details of the incident. He added that he will make public whatever details become available to him. His excellency affirmed that he will leave for Ismailia tomorrow as scheduled.

Promise To Release Hostages

NC181955Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1931 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Nicosia, 18 February--The Cypriot plane took off with the hostages for an unknown destination at 2030 tonight following the failure of the negotiations with the kidnapers and their rejection of pleas from the Cyprus president and the Syrian military attache to release the hostages. The Egyptian ambassador in Nicosia, Hasan Shash, who has been in the airport since 1330, took part in the negotiations. The Egyptian ambassador said the fedayeen have promised to release the hostages at the first airport they arrive at.

ELF Official Denounces Killing

NC182035Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1958 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 18 February--Eritrean Liberation Front [ELF] representative in Cairo Idris Kiladios has denied reports that a female member of the ELF participated in the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i. Idris Kiladios, speaking on behalf of the ELF, vehemently disowned and condemned this regrettable incident. He praised the role performed by Yusuf as-Siba'i through his post in AAPSO in supporting the Eritrean people's struggle for liberation and independence.

Plane Reportedly Lands in Tripoli

LD190002Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2330 GMT 18 Feb 78 LD

[Excerpt] Radio Israel said at 2300 tonight that the [hijacked] plane has landed at Tripoli airport.

12 Hostages on plane

NC182116Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 2055 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpt] Nicosia, 18 February--There are 12 hostages aboard the Cyprus plane in addition to the three crew members and the two terrorists. Everybody here is speculating that the plane is headed for Libya.

Body of As-Siba'i Flown to Cairo

NC190544Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0500 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpt] The plane carrying the body of Yusuf as-Siba'i arrived in Cairo this morning. The body was accompanied by Culture and Information Minister 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi, members of the Egyptian delegation to the AAPSO meetings, a number of Egyptian journalists and some members of the other delegations taking part in the conference. The Egyptian plane which carried the body took off from the British base of Akrotiri in Cyprus at about 0400 today. Yusuf as-Siba'i will be given a military funeral. The funeral will be held at 'Umar Makram Mosque in At-Tahrir Square at 1230 today.

Funeral Held in Cairo

NC191328Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpt] The late martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i was given an official and popular funeral this afternoon. The funeral procession began from 'Umar Makram Mosque and was led by Vice President Muhammad Husni Mubarak as President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat's representative. People's Assembly Speaker Engineer Sayyid Mar'i; Prime Minister Mamduh Salim; the official responsible for specialized national councils, Dr Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir Hatim; First Secretary of the ASU Central Committee Dr Mustafa Khalil; Al-Azhar Shaykh Dr 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud; the deputy prime ministers; Information and Culture Minister 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi; the ministers; the leaders of the parties; religious leaders; journalists, writers; senior armed forces and police officers; and a large crowd of people attended the funeral.

Palestinians, 'Arafat Denounced

NC191630Y Cairo DPA in Arabic 1555 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpt] Cairo, 19 February--Thousands of mourners who walked in the funeral procession for Egyptian journalist Yusuf as-Siba'i today shouted: "No Palestine after today." The 60-year-old journalist and writer was killed in Cyprus at the hands of gunmen said to be Palestinians. In addition to reiterating "no God but one God," the thousands of people who walked behind the coffin, which was draped with the military flag, chanted the Egyptian national anthem "My Country, My Country," which dates back to the era of the British occupation.

The shouts of the masses against the Palestinians were received with sympathy by many of the mourners. A demonstration was later staged. The demonstrators launched strong attacks against the Palestinians, calling on the Egyptian president to take revenge. They shouted slogans against PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat such as "'Arafat, 'Arafat, restrain your dogs."

Commando Operation Reported

NC192015Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] The hijacking operation of the Cyprus Airways plane ended tonight after the two hijackers surrendered following a fierce battle at the airport. News agencies report that one of the hijackers left the plane waving a white flag, that the Cyprus National Guard forces arrested him and that the hostages cleared the plane within 10 minutes.

UPI reports that the fate of the other terrorist is still unknown. News agencies report that an Egyptian commando unit arrived at Larnaca airport aboard a C-130 military plane a short time after the landing of the hijacked plane at Larnaca airport this evening. Agencies report that the Egyptian commandos opened fire on the plane and that three armored cars of the Cyprus National Guard helped the Egyptian commandos in their operation.

We shall, ladies and gentlemen, provide you with first-hand complete details of this story as soon as we receive them.

Further Details on Operation

NC192026Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2015 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] We have just received the following: The Egyptian commandos have freed all 16 [as heard] hostages who were detained by the two assassins of Yusuf as-Siba'i. The two terrorists surrendered and they were arrested.

News agencies report that this operation lasted about 50 minutes during which a fierce battle took place at the airport. The reports say that the Egyptian force, consisting of about 100 soliders, opened fire as negotiations were taking place with the two terrorists to release the 16 hostages. [Above report was followed by 2 minutes of martial music followed by light opera.]

All Hostages Released

NC192050Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2036 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Here is the following statement: A special Egyptian unit tonight stormed the hijacked Cyprus plane parked at Larnaca airport in Cyprus. One of the two terrorists was arrested and the other wounded. All hostages who were detained in the plane have been released. A responsible source at Larnaca airport has stated that the two murderers surrendered to the Cyprus authorities and that all the detained hostages were freed.

Cairo Radio: Cyprus 'Interfered'

NC192127Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2055 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Gentlemen: Here is the following statement:

The operation of the hijacking of the Cyprus Airways plane ended tonight following the surrender of the two hijackers after the intervention of the Egyptian commandos and their surprise operation.

The Egyptian commandos freed all the 16 hostages who were detained by the two assassins of Yusuf as-Siba'i. The two terrorists have surrendered and have been arrested. A Cypriot official made a statement confirming these reports.

News agencies say that this operation lasted about 50 minutes during which a fierce battle took place at Larnaca airport. News agencies add that the Cyprus Guard interfered and tried to prevent the Egyptian commandos from carrying out their operation. They further report that the Egyptian force, consisting of about 100 soldiers, opened fire when the negotiations were being held with the two terrorists to release the 16 hostages. News agencies report that one of the two hijackers left the plane waving a white flag, that the Cyprus National Guard arrested him and that the hostages cleared the plane after 10 minutes.

MENA reports that one of the two hijakers has surrendered and that the other has been wounded. News agencies say that an Egyptian commando unit arrived at Larnaca airport aboard an Egyptian C-130 military aircraft shortly after the landing of the hijacked plane in the airport this evening. News agencies say that the Egyptian commandos opened fire on the aircraft.

'Fierce Battle' at Larnaca

NC1921347 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 19 February 78 NC

[Text] Gentlemen: We have just received the following report: An urgent REUTER dispatch, citing well-informed Palestinian sources, says that all the hostages who were held by the two armed terrorists at Larnaca airport in Cyprus have been freed without any hostage being harmed. This took place following a fierce battle between the Egyptian commandos and the forces of the Cyprus National Guard that were at Larnaca airport. The Cypriot Guard had tried to prevent the Egyptian commandos from carrying out their operation to rescue the hostages.

Salim Contacts Cyprus Officials

NC1921417 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2133 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] We have just received the following: The Government of Cyprus issued a statement tonight saying that the Egyptian commandos who carried out the Larnaca airport operation in Cyprus to rescue the hostages from the armed terrorists acted without the permission or approval of the Cyprus Government and that the Egyptian plane which carried the commandos was supposed to be carrying an Egyptian minister.

An Egyptian official source has stated that Prime Minister Mamduh Salim had contacted the Cyprus authorities early in the morning and had told them that an Egyptian plane would arrive in Cyprus to help in saving the lives of the hostages.

Mubarak Contacts Kiprianou

NC1923517 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2320 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] We have just received the following:

Vice President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has contacted President of Cyprus Kiprianou and has explained to him that the aim of the Egyptian force which saved the hostages from the hands of the two armed terrorists was to help Cyprus in preventing the practice of terrorism in the area. In his conversation with the president of Cyprus, the vice president affirmed that Egypt's primary desire now is that the two terrorists be handed over to it and the Egyptian forces should return home.

The radio correspondent reports that the president of Cyprus has contacted UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to mediate and eliminate any misunderstanding in this regard. Several contacts took place after this. Waldheim talked with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, Egypt's permanent delegate at the United Nations. 'Abd al-Majid contacted the minister of state for foreign affairs on this subject.

It should be noted that Prime Minister Mamduh Salim had contacted the Cyprus authorities early this morning and notified them that an Egyptian plane would arrive in Cyprus to help in the operation of saving the lives of the hostages. After the completion of the Larnaca operation, however, the Cyprus authorities said that the force had acted without the permission or approval of the Government of Cyprus.

Information Minister's Statement

NC192339Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2255 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[19 February statement by Egyptian Information and Culture Minister 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi--read by announcer]

[Text] The Government of Egypt has followed at first hand the movements of the Cyprus aircraft which was hijacked by two Palestinian terrorists, one of whomcarried an Iraqi passport and the other a Kuwaiti passport. The terrorists took with them 11 innocent hostages, including 4 Egyptians, after they had assassinated the deceased martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i. The Government of Egypt adopted a decisive and final decision. It decided that it will not allow terrotism to become the language of dealings in the age of freedom and democracy, independence of the national will and supremacy of the law.

Egypt has also declared that it will not be lenient or tolerate any attack on any Egyptian anywhere and that it will adopt decisive measures in every instance to discipline anyone who contemplates treating human life with disrespect and hiding himself from the facts of our age under the guise of terrorism. As soon as the hijacked plane began to move [presumably from Larnaca the first time], the Egyptian authorities ordered a unit of the Egyptian shock [as-sa'iqah] forces equipped to follow up the aircraft, discipline the two rabid terrorists and release the hostages.

When the Egyptian authorities ascertained that the aircraft was on its way back to Larnaca airport in Cyprus, Prime Minister Mamduh Salim contacted the Cyprus authorities to inform them that the Government of Egypt had decided to dispatch a military aircraft to help Cyprus authorities deal with this terrorism and release the hostages. The hijacked aircraft tried to mislead and deceive in order not to reveal its intention or destination. However, the Egyptian aircraft which was entrusted with this delicate humanitarian mission had watched the movements of the hijacked aircraft since noon today when it was being supplied with fuel at Djibouti airport so that it could carry out its duty at the most appropriate moment.

The hijacked aircraft landed at Larnaca airport in Cyprus at 1800 today. The Egyptian commandos' aircraft landed in the same airport at 1830 today. Observers among the world journalists and representatives of the news agencies were surprised to see the Egyptian aircraft at the airport. It carried 60 Egyptian commandos, who immediately began to carry out their task with accuracy, skill and bravery, which dazzled all the observers and the eyewitnesses at the airport. When the attack against the aircraft was intensified, the two terrorists surrendered. All hostages were safely released. During this noble operation, the Egyptian shock force was taken by surprise when the Cyprus National Guard intervened in an attempt to prevent the force from completing its task of disciplining the terrorists and freeing hostages.

The forces of the Cyprus National Guard destroyed the Egyptian plane with an antitank gun. Furthermore, a Cypriot tank force participated in the fighting against the Egyptian force while it was storming the hijacked plane. The Cypriots did this under the pretext that this force had landed without the permission of the Cyprus authorities, although the Cyprus authorities had been given prior notice of this action by His Excellency Prime Minister Mamduh Salim. Despite this, the Egyptian force, through persistence and determination, succeeded in releasing all the hostages and apprehending the terrorists. As a result of the clash between the Cyprus forces and members of the Egyptian commando force, the two sides suffered a number of dead and wounded.

The objective of the Egyptian force was to crush the terrorist [illegible] Cyprus itself has been a victim of over the past 2 days. This terrorism claimed martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i as its victim. He was savagely and treacherously assassinated on the land of Cyprus. This was an insult to the Cyprus soil as well as to the AAPSO conference, which was the guest of Cyprus and was under its protection.

The Egyptian force dealt with terrorism and faced the Cyprus National Guard at the same time. Despite this, the force successfully achieved its mission, although it had sustained some losses of life in addition to the fact that its plane had been hit.

Thus, Egypt has fulfilled its announced pledge to combat terrorism and to discipline all those who would think of using this depraved weapon against Egypt. Egypt has also fulfilled its announced pledge to inflict punishment on those who would attack its citizens in a manner far removed from any legal or ethical reason.

Despite this, Egypt wishes to explain to the Cyprus authorities that it did not go to Cyprus to violate its territory, but to help it confront this aggression to which Egyptians had been exposed in an obnoxious and treacherous form. The Cyprus Government is aware of Egypt's role in liberating the territory of Cyprus and in devoting attention to its independence, which absolves Egypt of any motive except concern for the dignity and independence of Cyprus. In doing this Egypt is expressing a basic policy which it has adopted as its principle and objective--showing concern for the freedom and independence of every land, people and state. It was on the basis of this concern that its leader, President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat, launched his initiative. This initiative is aimed at peace, justice and security for all mankind, particularly those who have suffered for a long time from the wars of the Middle East, particularly the sons of the Palestinian people.

However, peace, by its very nature, rejects terrorism and coercion of the will. Another requirement of peace is that the logic of terrorism should end and that disputed issues should be resolved through dialog and understanding in a manner far removed from bloodshed and the spreading of fear among people.

It is the right of people to live in security and it is nobody's right to convict or try anybody falsely or to enact against him oppressive sentences which are incompatible with righteousness, justice and law.

His Excellency Prime Minister Mamduh Salim has summoned his excellency the ambassador of Cyprus in Cairo to reach an understanding about this situation.

Foreign Ministry Official's Statement

NC201240Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1220 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 20 February--Egyptian Foreign Ministry First Under Secretary Dr Usamah al-Baz has affirmed that the landing of the Egyptian plane at Larnaca airport in Cyprus took place with the permission of the Cyprus Government. He said that Egypt had given the Cyprus Government prior notice about the plane and the notice was specific.

In a statement to MENA Dr al-Baz said that the purpose of sending the Egyptian plane was to assist Cyprus in putting an end to the terrorist operation. He stressed that Egypt had no intention of violating the sovereignty of Cyprus.

Dr al-Baz added that Egypt's role in helping Cyprus gain its independence and its interest in maintaining this independence is well known. Egypt's role stems from the principle of support for the sovereignty and independence of all states.

Cyprus Insists on Disarming Commandos

NC201140Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1105 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Nicosia, 20 February--The MENA correspondent in Nicosia has learned that the Cyprus Government today insisted on disarming the Egyptian shock force. The correspondent has also learned that in view of this, the Egyptian military attache handed over the arms of the Egyptian shock force men to the Cyprus authorities.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian ambassador in Nicosia, Hasan Shash, remained in Larnaca until the early hours today to look after the comfort of the Egyptian forces. The ambassador is continuing his contacts with the Cyprus officials toward this end.

Ghali Leaves for Cyprus

NC201148Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1135 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 20 February--Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Butrus Ghali left Cairo for Cyprus at 1245 today as President Anwar as-Sadat's emissary to hold discussions with the Cyprus officials pertaining to the terrorist operation and to study the situation on the spot. Dr Ghali is accompanied by his office director, Ambassador 'Ala' Khayrat, and Foreign Ministry adviser 'Abd al-Qadir al-Hafnawi.

Ghali Meets With Cypriot Officials

For materials on Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ghali's discussion with Cypriot officials and for Nicosia accounts and comment on the assassination, hijacking and subsequent events, see the Cyprus section of the 21 February issue of the Western Europe DAILY REPORT.

Information Minister Interviewed

NC201642Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1510 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Interview with Egyptian Culture and Information Minister 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi on developments following the Larnaca airport incidents--recorded]

[Text] [Question] Your Excellency the Minister, what is the state of affairs now between Cairo and Cyprus?

[Answer] From Egypt's point of view, the state of affairs is quite clear. We know that the moment Cairo was informed of the death of the departed martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i and the seizure of a number of Egyptian citizens, Prime Minister Mamduh Salim met with a number of ministers. The situation was discussed very clearly and frankly and a statement was issued emphasizing Egypt's concern to recover and put on trial the two terrorists who perpetrated the incident and who had been arrested. They started by carrying out this act. Then they took over the hotel and tried to spread fear everywhere. It was necessary for these two terrorists to be put on trial in Cairo since the crime was committed against an Egyptian citizen as well as others. At the same time, it was imperative to release the hostages, to see to it that they were safe and to return them to Egypt.

From that moment Cairo was acting precisely along these lines and with complete clarity. Cairo's announcement was frank and clear. It was broadcast to the whole world. Definitely, Cyprus heard this announcement. Mamduh Salim telephoned the Cyprus vice president because the president was then on his way back from Greece and he was unable to receive any calls. Condolences were offered and so on. Mamduh Salim emphasized the wish and decision of the Egyptian Government that the two terrorists be tried in Cairo and that all the hostages immediately be released safe and sound.

The Cyprus authorities spent a long time, well over 12 hours, in constant negotiations with the two terrorists. These negotiations produced nothing, and the situation continued to be extremely vague. Egyptian public opinion continued to watch these developments with extreme concern, because nobody could condone terrorism as a means for reaching understanding in this century and it was impossible for us to remain subject to the actions of some rancorous fools manipulated by vague and unknown quarters which were cowardly enough to hide behind a few boys who spread fear everywhere.

After the plane had flown for a whole day, shuttling from one place to another, it was imperative to take an appropriate stand, as was announced in the Egyptian statement issued the day before yesterday. Therefore, a group of Egyptian commandos was sent, and the Cyprus authorities were informed that Egypt would indeed send a plane to Cyprus to assist the Cyprus authorities to overcome this terrorism, free the hostages and bring the two terrorists to Cairo to face a just trial by the Egyptian courts.

When the Egyptian force--and a limited force at that, formed of 60 shock troops members--went to Cyprus, their task was entirely confined to bringing the two terrorists here and saving the hostages from the suffering they had been undergoing all this time.

The result was something they did not expect at all. The Cyprus forces opened fire on them. Tanks and armored cars entered the airport to stop this operation, which was a lawful and humanitarian operation carried out by friends who were trying to help Cyprus in dealing with this terrible situation. The commandos were surprised to see the Cyprus forces themselves interfering to stop this operation. It was the primary duty of the commandos to achieve the objective for which they had gone there--to bring back the two terrorists and free the hostages--and to defend themselves against these forces which had illogically interfered without prior notice to stop this operation.

We hail the unique heroism members of the shock forces exhibited in the face of this surprising and strange situation. We hail their valor and their ability to stand firm and their insistence on carrying out their task with all their determination, skill and accuracy despite the sacrifices. The sacrifices of life and the damage to the aircraft are nothing compared with the heroism they exhibited and the great goal they achieved.

Egyptian victims fell there and Egyptian blood was shed there for the sake of upholding what is right, stopping terrorism and securing the area against this sabotage, which is being financed and encouraged by obscure and cowardly sides which have failed to disclose themselves.

[Question] How do you explain the unexpected interference by the Cyprus forces in the mission of the armed force which went to the Cyprus airport?

[Answer] An explanation is difficult because the Cyprus forces are entitled to speak for themselves. However, an ordinary observer becomes bewildered when he sees Cyprus forces interfering to stop the operation of an Egyptian force which had come to protect the security of Cyprus and establish peace on the land of Cyprus. This is indeed puzzling. Was there any kind of commitment or relations which led to such a stand? Did Cyprus feel that this was like the Entebbe operation, for example, and directed against Cyprus? All these possibilities are refuted because the Entebbe operation was carried out without the permission or notification of the Ugandan authorities. Nobody knew about the Entebbe operation, [illegible]reas Egypt, in its capacity as a friendly state, was anxious to notify the author[illegible] in Cyprus that it would be sending an aircraft to help them to overcome this [illegible]ation. This stand is indeed puzzling and bewildering. We hope that this was a temporary emotional stand. The relations between Egypt and Cyprus have always been friendly and fraternal, based on friendship and mutual respect. I hope that Cyprus will restore this state. It is dealing with this questi[illegible] now in the negotiations that are taking place between it and the minister of state for foreign affairs.

Commandos Return to Cairo

NC2023519Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2342 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Text] We have just received the following:

The plane carrying the returning heroes, members of the shock force who went to Cyprus to carry out their humanitarian and sensitive mission of releasing the hijacked persons, returned to the homeland a short while ago. The entire cabinet participated in welcoming the heroes, who returned after carrying out their humanitarian mission. Their morale was very high because of what they did.

Al-Jamasi Welcomes Commandos

NC2102130Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 0135 GMT 21 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpts] Cairo, 20 February--The Egyptian plane carrying the Egyptian shock heroes who saved the hostages and arrested the two terrorists at Larnaca airport in Cyprus arrived in Cairo airport at 0130 today. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Butrus Ghali, the heroes of the shock unit and those who were wounded by the gunfire of the Cyprus National Guard arrived aboard the special military plane. The plane also carried the bodies of the martyr heroes who were felled by the bullets of the Cyprus treachery.

As-Sadat Absent Because of Health

Gen Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Jamasi addressed the returning heroes saying: I have come to you on behalf of the president of the republic, the supreme commander of the armed forces, to thank you and tell you that the president himself wished to come but that temporary health conditions have prevented him from coming. You will meet him soon.

Al-Jamasi added: The cabinet has issued a decision providing that the prime minister and the ministers should come to welcome you in appreciation of the effort you exerted. The shock forces have always been an example of sacrifice. You went to Cyprus for the sake of Egypt's honor, prestige and dignity. Some of you died and others were wounded for the sake of Egypt, its honor and dignity.

Concluding his address, Al-Jamasi said. I hope that the shock troops will always remain, as we have known them, suicide commandos. We appreciate the difficult conditions you faced in Cyrpus. We were confident that you would accomplish your task through your sacrifices. You have earned the admiration of everyone.

Threat To Intervene Denied

NC2100247 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0014 GMT 21 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 20 February--Culture and Information Minister 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi tonight denied a report by a foreign news agency that Egypt threatened to intervene militarily in Cyprus if the Cyprus Government rejected Egypt's demand to return the Egyptian commandos to Cairo. In a statement to MENA, 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi described these reports as a counterpropaganda campaign.

CABINET MEETS UNDER SALIM TO DISCUSS CYPRUS EVENTS

NC2020107 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1949 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Text] The cabinet met this evening under the chairmanship of Mamduh Salim. Information and Culture Minister 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi has stated that the cabinet heard a detailed report on the implications of the incident of the assassination of the departed Yusuf as-Siba'i and what happened regarding the shock force which went to Cyrpus to carry out a sensitive, humanitarian mission--the release of the hostages. Mamduh Salim told the cabinet that President as-Sadat has decided to confer the Star of Sinai on the martyr members of the shock force and to grant medals to all members of the force in appreciation of the valor they exhibited in carrying out their great mission at Larnaca airport.

The cabinet then heard a detailed report by General al-Jamasi dealing with the outstanding heroism of the members of the Egyptian force.

It has been decided that General al-Jamasi will make a comprehensive statement at the People's Assembly at its next session to explain the picture and show the great achievement which is aimed at safeguarding Egypt's dignity and prestige in facing the base plan of the rejectionist front and the rancorous quarters in the world which support them.

It was also decided that the entire cabinet will participate tonight in welcoming the returning hero members of the shock force in appreciation of their heroic stand.

Let every Egyptian rest assured that their armed forces are able to carry out the tasks assigned to them and safeguard the Egyptian dignity and that they work for right, justice and dignity and for the success of the peace initiative which President Anwar as-Sadat has led.

Decision To Suspend Ties

NC2021582Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2146 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Ladies and gentlemen: We have just received the following:

Information and Culture Minister 'Abd al-Mun'im as-Sawi has stated that at its meeting tonight under the chairmanship of Mamduh Salim, the cabinet decided the following:

1. To withdraw the diplomatic mission in Cyprus and also the members of the Egyptian technical and trade offices there and to reconsider the various forms of Egyptian-Cypriot relations in a manner compatible with the unfriendly attitude the Government of Cyprus adopted toward Egypt and its citizens.

2. The Government of Cyprus must withdraw its diplomatic mission and all its trade and technical missions from Cairo.

3. The cabinet has decided to hail members of the valiant shock force for their great role in facing unexpected and abnormal circumstances when it was suddenly and unexpectedly attacked by an authority which the force had considered friendly and had thought would help it in its task.

4. The cabinet has decided that the families of the martyrs should be treated as families of the martyrs of war with all consequent advantages and that the other members of the force who participated in this courageous operation be honored according to the proposals to be submitted by the War Ministry.

Cabinet Issues Statement

NC2108355Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 2355 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 20 February--The cabinet issued a statement tonight declaring that it shares the Egyptian people's deep admiration for the valiant members of the Egyptian shock force which carried out its duty at Larnaca airport to release the hostages, arrest the terrorist murderers and defend the dignity of Egypt and the Egyptians.

The statement condemns the attack which the Cypriot National Guard launched against members of the Egyptian shock force after they freed the hostages and arrested the terrorists. It also condemns the act of hitting the plane that brought them with antitank rockets and destroying it. The statement says that this attack took place despite the fact that during the contacts which took place with Cyprus at the early stages of the incident the Cyprus authorities expressed their desire for joint cooperation.

The statement refers to the savage attack which took place in Cyprus, which resulted in the death of AAPSO Secretary Yusuf as-Siba'i. It says that the slackness in guarding the martyr and in allowing the two terrorist killers to escape gives the Egyptian people the right to raise several questi ns.

The statement says that Egypt, which affirmed its stand alongside the international community in opposing terrorism, requests the extradition of the two terrorists, the immediate return of the Egyptian force and the reestablishment of Egyptian-Cypriot relations in light of what has been proved by these events.

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The cabinet met at 2000 today to study the situation and all the circumstances related to the two terrorist ugly crime in assassinating martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i while doing his duty at the AAPSO conference in Cyprus; the taking of 11 hostages of various nationalities including 8 Egyptians; the terrorists' escape from Cyprus aboard a Cypriot airliner, which the Cypriot authorities put at their disposal in response to their threats. The cabinet also studied the events following the terrorists return to Cyprus after all states in the area refused to allow the airliner with the terrorists to land, Egypt's contribution by sending a shock force which succeeded in freeing the hostages and arresting the two terrorists, and the clashes resulting from the Cypriot National Guard attack against this small force, and the destruction of the Egyptian plane which carried them while it was on the tarmac at Larnaca airport.

After Prime Minister Mamduh Salim reviewed all the implications of these events, the foreign contacts which took place throughout the previous day and night until dawn today, and after the cabinet studied all aspects of these events and various stands, the ministers stood up to mourn the martyrs and heroes.

The following is the text of the cabinet's statement:

1. The cabinet declares that it shares the grief of all our people, of the Arab people and hundreds of millions of people of Asia and Africa represented by AAPSO, and of all press and information media and men of literature and opinion-making circles in which martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i held a prominent position as a free struggler and thinker, defending the rights of peoples. Yusuf as-Siba'i fell as a hero martyr while fighting for freedom and peace for the Arab people and for all peoples.

2. The cabinet affirms--as a result of its study of the facts related to the ugly crime against a prominent Egyptian personality of high standing in the Egyptian, Arab and international circles--that the assassination is connected in its essence and aims with the attempts to undermine the issue of establishing a just peace in the Middle East. The whole world and the peoples in the area have supported the peace efforts. Consequently, Cyprus should have shown an understanding of the broader context of the peace efforts in the area, of which Cyprus is a part, since stability in the area will benefit Cyprus and the friendly Cypriot people.

3. On the basis of its study of the circumstances under which this criminal incident took place and the world press agencies' reports of eyewitnesses, the cabinet emphasizes that the incident is part of the attempts to undermine the peace initiative begun by President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat's historic trip. It is part of the attempts to abort the successes achieved by his excellency's recent tour and the many trips made by prominent Egyptian personalities to explain the aspects of Arab justness and right to the world. It is also part of the attempts to abort the successes achieved at the official level and in the international arena in influencing world public opinion. Consequently, it has been ascertained that the clear aim of this abominable crime is to isolate Egypt so that no personality of international standing would come out of Egypt to win world support for Egypt's efforts to establish peace.

The cabinet believes that this crime, according to the objectives of its plotters, is automatically aimed at all Egyptian activities and at the commercial, political, technical and information contacts for which prominent Egyptian personalities travel abroad. Consequently, its aim is to attempt to isolate Egypt in all fields--something which Egypt will not permit whatever the price.

4. The cabinet believes that this crime does not fall merely within the framework of direct bilateral relations between Egypt and Cyprus; it falls within the framwork of international solidarity to fight international terrorism--the case that is raised in international conferences. In recent incidents, there has been joint bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This automatically puts the crime within the framework of international cooperation between the states against whose critizens and planes an aggression has been committed and the states in which the terrorists seek refuge.

In dealing with this incident, Egypt acted on this basis and on the basis of the understanding it expected from the Cyprus authorities, especially because in the preliminary contacts that took place with Cyprus at the early stages of the incident, the Cyprus authorities showed a desire for joint cooperation.

5. Throughout its history, Egypt has been eager to maintain good relations between Cyprus and the Egyptian people in view of their historical relations and their proximity in the Middle East area and in view of their membership in the nonalined movement and in view of the contemporary friendship which was confirmed by the joint understanding reached with the great departed Cypriot leader Makarios.

The cabinet emphasizes that Egypt, which adopted firm stands in support of Cyprus' gaining its independence, which is the height of national sovereignty, cannot possibly contemplate harming the sovereignty of Cyprus within a narrower framework. This should have been taken into consideration by the Cypriot officials as they were dealing with the events.

6. As a result of this, Egypt gave the Cyprus officials every opportunity to exercise their authority to arrest the two terrorists murderers and, before that, to assume their responsibilities in safeguarding martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i in his capacity as an Egyptian member of international standing taking part in the AAPSO conference.

However, there are certain aspects which stand out clearly before world public opinion: that the assassination of martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i took place within the framework of this important international conference, which included personalities who are influential in the international, Asian and African fields, and under slackness in providing protection, so much so that two terrorists alone were able to kill the AAPSO secretary general, martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i, after they had previously spent a few days, together with their weapons, at the hotel in which the delegations to the conference were staying. Later and in front of all the Cyprus authorities, they were able to take the hostages out in a manner that was humiliating to all the states affiliated with it [presumably AAPSO] and with their hands tied behind their backs and to travel for tens of kilometers to the airport where they were allowed to leave the country where they committed their crime without any attempt to prevent them from doing so.

The Egyptian Cabinet draws attention to the fact that through its slackness the Cypriot side did not attempt to hold joint consultations and to cooperate with Egypt although Egypt was the one concerned with the blood that was shed and although Egypt was fully prepared to respond to fill the existing gaps and to prevent the escape of the criminals.

The cabinet believes that in dealing with such a crime of broad dimensions within the framework of fighting international terrorism, which affects all peoples, this must not be done merely within the context of getting rid of the criminals and releasing their hostages but within the context of mutual cooperation and of fighting terrorism and terrorist murderers. This was the responsibility of the Cypriot authorities.

7. The Egyptian Cabinet, in studying the Cypriot forces' attack against the Egyptian shock force, rightly expresses the observations of the Egyptian people when it says that it disagrees with Cyprus' view that Egypt's participation in saving the hostages and arresting the murderers was an aggression against the sovereingty of Cyprus. It was clear to world public opinion that saving the hostages and arresting the murderers were the aim of the Egyptian force which landed at the Cypriot airport with the approval of the Cyprus authorities. It was illogical and unacceptable that a small force of 60 men should be attacked with tanks and armored cars and that the Egyptian plane on the tarmac should be attacked with antitank fire as though it were a tank moving on Cyprus. It was possible, even within the limit of the Cypriot view, to handle the situation in an appropriate manner.

In view of such complete slackness in protecting martyr As-Siba'i and in allowing the two terrorist murderers to escape, the Egyptian people have the right to raise several questions.

8. The Egyptian viewpoint does not agree with the Cypriot view that the situation was about to be resolved on the basis of the possibility of releasing the hostages in return for allowing the murderers to escape. This is because the situation is completely different from that of the crime of killing. The arrest of the murderers is a Cypriot responsibility which cannot be evaded.

The Egyptian viewpoint also does not agree with such behavior for humanitarian reasons. Egypt has always been eager to take into consideration humanitarian reasons and to preserve the safety of the hostages. Egypt, however, reminds the Cypriot authorities of what they actually know, namely, that in similar incidents in Egypt and in other states it was possible to arrest the terrorists without harming the hostages and to assume full responsibility.

9. The cabinet affirms through its clarification of stands in this statement that Egypt, which has confirmed its stand alongside the international community in fighting terrorism, rightly requests the extradition of the terrorists, the immediate return of the Egyptian force and the reestablishment of Egyptian-Cypriot relations in light of what has been proved by these events.

10. The cabinet, which represents the Egyptian people in preserving their dignity, interests and position in the Arab and international arena, shares the profound appreciation of all the Egyptian people for the heroic Egyptian force which performed its duty in freeing the hostages, arresting the terrorist murderers and in defending the dignity of Egypt and the Egyptians.

11. The Egyptian Cabinet firmly asserts that this incident will not bar Egypt from pursuing its honest line, which the whole world supports, to establish peace. Egypt will not stop for a moment its support of international solidarity against international terrorism, and it will never be isolated or frightened by anyone whatever the price may be. Egypt is determined to establish peace based on justice and to preserve the legitimate rights of all peoples and security for all peoples. Egypt is committed to regain the Arab land and restore Arab rights. It will continue to pursue the civilized course, which the whole world respects, under the leadership of our great leader, Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat.

Leaders Contact As-Sadat

NC2100555Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2330 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpt] The radio correspondent reports that Vice President Husni Mubarak, Prime Minister Mamduh Salim and Deputy Prime Minister and War Minister Gen Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Jamasi were in constant touch with President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat on Monday to follow up the situation.

COMMENT ON, REACTION TO ASSASSINATION, HIJACKING

Press Comment on 19 Feb

LD1903330Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 2330 GMT 18 Feb 78 LD

[Press review]

[Excerpts] Cairo, 18 February--News of the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i, chairman of the management board of AL-AHRAM establishment and AAPSO secretary general, in Cyprus today are reported in banner headlines and cover the front pages of Cairo papers that will be published tomorrow. The papers also report in banner headlines Egypt's determination to confront treachery in any place through measures [words indistinct] the two terrorists who assassinated As-Siba'i and took a plane to an unidentified destination after taking a number of hostages. The papers also devote much space to reactions to the assassination, which unanimously condemn this criminal action and demand severe punishment for its perpetrators.

AL-AHRAM says: It has transpired that the perpetrators of the ugly crime unfortunately belong to some of the Palestinian terrorist organizations that claim to belong to the Palestinian people and the noble Palestinian struggle. Through their crimes they have harmed and are still harming the honorable objectives of the Palestinian people. With such dastardly terrorist operations they are detracting from the struggle of the honest and sincere Palestinians.

The paper adds: There is no doubt that the disease of political terror and killing innocent people is something that must be condemned and be countered with every drastic measure that would check the spread of this cursed political cancer in the body of the Palestinian liberation movement and of the whole Arab nation.

AL-AHRAM continues: The claim that the assassination of innocent and unarmed people is an armed struggle, or political, liberation or revolutionary struggle, or any other pretext whatever it may be, is a blatant falsification and an insult to human and religious values. It is indeed a violation of the legality and nobility of struggle and a departure from its true course that will definitely lead to political nihilism, which history will discard on its pile of dirt.

The paper says that if a political crime is committed because of a difference of opinion then its ugliness becomes several times uglier because failure to persaude with dialog and words finds expression in bullets killing the person who has a different opinion. Yusuf as-Siba'i, who was assassinated by this criminal gang, the paper says, was known to be a man with an opinion of his own with whom people might differ. But he was not a traitor to the cause of his country and the cause of liberation, which he defended, and he defended the Palestinian people in particular.

Concluding, the paper stresses that the time has come for the Arab nation to bring to account those who harm it and violate its honor and values.

Commenting on the same subject, AL-JUMHURIYAH says that the only thing that those who assassinated Yusuf as-Siba'i with their bullets have achieved is they have exposed themselves to the world and shown their true color.

The paper adds: They have failed to come face to face with the Egyptian people despite the millions that have been put in their pockets and the hundreds of trumpets that have been put at their service, and, therefore, they singled out one Egyptian--Yusuf as-Siba'i--in order to direct the bullets of their poisonous hatred at Egypt.

Referring to As-Siba'i's life history, the paper says that he spent all his life fighting--fighting with the rifle and gun when he was an officer in the Egyptian Army and with words when he was a writer, thinker, and man of letters. Yusuf as-Siba'i's fight was not only to defend Egypt and its principles but also for the sake of Palestine and Arabism as well as for the solidarity of millions of human beings in Asia and Africa. And because those who were behind the treacherous bullets that killed him are aware of this fact and because of their real caliber, they were afraid to face him. Instead he was faced by gunmen who attacked him sneakily like cowards and theives, thus proving how insignificant they are.

Concluding, AL-JUMHURIYAH says: If big men commit a crime they should be brought to account but if small men commit a crime then they must be punished. Everyone of the 40 million Egyptians considers these treacherous bullets as having been directed against himself but, having missed, as hitting Yusuf as-Siba'i. Therefore, the blood of martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i will never be wasted even to the end of time.

Commenting on the same subject, AL-AKHBAR says: The assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i is a reckless crime that is typical of vileness, meanness, cowardice and barbarism. As far as its motives and objectives are concerned, it is a crime against Egypt and the Egyptian people and against every honest nation struggling for the freedom of peoples and nations.

The paper adds: This crime, with all its vileness and cowardice, is not just a crime committed by two hired young men who have no purpose in life. It is an action perpetrated by those cowards and mean people who stand behind this crime, who premeditated it, planned it and spent large sums of money to implement it and to buy the means for it--arms and lost and stupid young men. They do all this because of their obsession with ulterior motives.

The paper says: This abominable crime, in its treachery and cowardice, has shaken Egypt and bereaved it with the loss of one of its brilliant and free sons who lived his life struggling for the cause of freedom and the life of peoples and nations and who fell martyr while holding in his hand the document of the struggle for the cause of the freedom of the African and Asian peoples. This crime has infuriated Egypt because it involves its dignity. Those criminals will realize that their crime will not go unpunished and that Egypt will not punish them for what they have done in the same cowardly, vile and treacherous manner they resorted to but will confront them firmly and openly--in a manner that will expose to the Arab nation their corruption, that will protect humanity from their evil and will avenge the dear blood so that it will not be in vain.

Press Comment on 20 Feb

NC2008210Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0610 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Press review]

[Excerpts] The three Cairo newspapers today highlight the Egyptian shock force attack on the plane carrying the two terrorists and their hostages at Larnaca airport in Cyprus. The papers say that the force, after a 45-minute battle, was able to obtain the release of all the hostages and to arrest the two terrorists.

The papers also point out that a large Cyprus army force attacked the Egyptian shock force following a telephone contact between Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and the president of Cyprus during which it was agreed not to hand over the two terrorists to Egypt.

The papers report that Vice President Mubarak contacted the president of Cyprus by telephone yesterday and explained that it was necessary to hand over the two terrorists who had assassinated Yusuf as-Siba'i to the Egyptian authorities in accordance with the principle of combating terrorism in the area.

Commenting on this subject, AL-AHRAM today says: Before terrorism becomes an epidemic throughout the entire world and mows down the lives of innocent, free and noble people and people with principles, the world states and peoples must fight this disease to prevent it from spreading.

Cooperation between the Somali and West German authorities resulted in rescuing the lives of innocent people. It was an example of shared international responsibility and an awakening of world conscience. The Cyprus Government should have viewed the Egyptian shock forces operation in Larnaca airport from the same angle and level. Pursuit of crime and terrorism, both political and criminal, is an international responsibility. All countries must participate in pursuing and hunting down terrorism relentlessly and with zeal because terrorism is blind and cowardly and does not discriminate between people or between concepts. The wave of terrorism can only be halted by punishment, severe punishment.

In an article published today, the newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH asserts that it is necessary for the PLO to act and not be content with condemning the criminals but to prosecute all instigators of previous murder operations and to halt future murder operations. This organization should assume its full responsibilities with regard to the Palestinian forces and people instead of simply continuing to reiterate the slogan that it alone represents the Palestinian people. When a Palestinian carries out a murder operation, the organization is content by simply declaring its innocence of the blood of the victims and martyrs without prosecuting, passing judgment and implementing the sentences.

If two persons have carried out the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i in Cyrpus, it is definite that they are not alone. An invitation to commit murder was sent by the PLO and all the states which met in Tripoli and Algiers. These states' attitude toward Egypt has influenced some Palestinian and other youths. The resolutions adopted by these states could be an invitation to commit murder.

We caution that Egypt is Arab and it will always remain Arab. Egypt believes in the need for solving the Palestinian issue and in the fact that this issue is the basis of the Middle East crisis and that not finding a solution to this problem makes the situation liable to explode at any time. Therefore, we want all the Palestinian organizations to help us in this.

It is impossible for all the Palestinian people to be responsible for the As-Siba'i murder or to be considered as accomplices. It is certain, however, that the invitation to act was the result of the rejectionist conference resolutions. The invitation was also made by numerous Palestinian organizations and Arab states whose stand is clear. Therefore, all of these must reconsider their stands and realize that the political game has more serious dimensions, particularly with regard to the new generation.

We call for recourse to reason and wisdom. We call on the Palestinians, the Egyptians and all the Arabs to do so. We shall continue to believe in Arabism whatever happens.

Trade Unions Statement

LD191915Y Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 1630 GMT 19 Feb 78 LD

[Excerpts] In the name of the Egyptian workers, the General Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions announces the death of the president of the Journalists Association and the president of the board of directors and editor in chief of AL-AHRAM, martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i, who was assassinated by a wicked terrorist and by cowardly, foolish treachery as he was performing his role at the AAPSO conference in Cairo in defense of the rights of the peoples of Africa and Asia and their struggle jointly for freedom, glory and dignity.

These treacherous bullets were directed against a dutiful son of the Egyptian Arab people with whom they seek refuge in times of hardships and from whom they seek protection when they are in trouble. Hence the ugliness, betrayal and criminal character of this action. The General Federation declares that this chaste blood that was shed will not go unpunished. All those who encouraged and instigated and committed this mean cowardly crime should receive just punishment.

AS-SADAT SEES 'ENCOURAGING SIGNS' IN MIDEAST

NC172128Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 2105 GMT 17 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 17 February--President Anwar as-Sadat has said there are encouraging signs in the situation in the Middle East. President as-Sadat was replying to a question put by foreign newsmen concerning U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton's upcoming visit to the Middle East. The president was at the Umm Kulthum Theater to attend tonight's performance of the operetta "Egypt, Our Country."

Asked about the Israeli settlements, President as-Sadat said: We have said our word--that is, the settlements are illegal and must be removed.

Asked about the criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin today by Israeli Knesset members and about whether this criticism is considered an encouraging sign for President as-Sadat, the president said: No comment.

AS-SADAT HOLDS LONG MEETING WITH MUBARAK

NC181335Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1328 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 18 February--President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat held a long meeting with Vice President Muhammad Husni Mubarak today.

AS-SADAT RECEIVES U.S., IRANIAN AMBASSADORS

NC181338Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1329 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 18 February--President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat today received U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Hermann Eilts. He also received Iranian Ambassador in Cairo Bahram Bahrami.

AS-SADAT ARRIVES IN ISMAILIA TO BEGIN TOUR

NC191311Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpts] President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat arrived in Ismailia at 1320 today accompanied by Engineer 'Uthman Ahmad 'Uthman, head of the parliamentary group of the Ismailia Governorate, to begin a tour during which he will inspect the food security projects and building projects in the governorate. President as-Sadat had earlier flown over the 10 Ramadan City and inspected the work going on in the new city. Vice President Husni Mubarak and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of War Gen Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Jamasi have also arrived in Ismailia.

To Distribute Land Title Deeds

NC190845Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0700 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpt] During his visits to the governorates of Al-Jizah al-Fayyum, Al-Wadi al-Jadid and Aswan to inspect the food security projects there, President Anwar as-Sadat will distribute title deeds for 40,500 feddans of newly reclaimed land to 10 land reclamation cooperative societies in these governorates. Minister of Irrigation and Land Reclamation Engineer 'Abd al-Azim Abu al-'Ata signed the title deeds at his meeting yesterday with the heads of the 10 cooperative societies.

MINISTER KAMIL GIVES SPEECH AT BONN RECEPTION

NC181936Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Foreign Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil has affirmed that Egypt is committed to achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem that would insure a solution to the Palestinian issue and bring about Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. He also affirmed that Egypt is not seeking a separate agreement with Israel but is acting within the framework of its concern for Arab interests.

This came in a speech by Foreign Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil during the reception given in his honor by Kasrawan Labaki, Lebanon's ambassador and dean of the Arab diplomatic corps in Bonn. The reception was attended by the ambassadors and heads of Arab diplomatic missions in Federal Germany. The foreign minister explained to the heads of Arab diplomatic missions the dimensions of President as-Sadat's peace initiative. He said Egypt will forge ahead in its efforts for peace until the Arabs' aspirations are fulfilled.

GOVERNMENT REPORTS RESHUFFLE IN CABINET

JN181835Y Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Text] In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful: Republican decree.

In accordance with the rules of Paragraph D of Article 58 of the provincial constitution, we decree:

First, Burhan ad-Din 'Abd ar-Rahman, Revolution Command Council [RCC] member, is relieved of the post of minister of state for coordinating activities in the autonomous area.

Second, Dr Najih Muhammad Khalil is relieved of the post of minister of industry and minerals.

Third, Dr Muhammad Sadiq al-Mashat is relieved of the post of minister of higher education and scientific research.

The ministers shall carry out the contents of this decree. Baghdad, 18 February 1978.

[Signed] Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, president of the republic.

In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful: Republican decree.

In accordance with the rules of Paragraph D of Article 58 of the provisional constitution, we decree:

First, Muhammad 'Ayish Hamad, RCC member, is appointed minister of industry and minerals.

Second, Khalid 'Abd 'Uthman is appointed minister of state for coordinating activities in the autonomous area.

Third, 'Adnan Husayn, RCC member and planning minister, is appointed acting minister of higher education and scientific research.

The ministers shall carry out the contents of this decree. Baghdad, 18 February 1978.

[Signed] Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, president of the republic.

BAGHDAD CITES JORDANIAN SOURCES ON SETTLEMENT ISSUE

JN171805Y Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Jordanian political circles have expressed the opinion that the As-Sadat regime and the Zionist entity, during the next few weeks, will reach an agreement on the principles of a settlement in the Arab region. The circles said that King Husayn is awaiting this declaration of principles in order to take part in the current negotiations between the Egyptian regime and the enemy to achieve a settlement in the Arab region.

Jordanian circles attached great significance to the current contacts between the U.S. Government on the one hand and the As-Sadat regime and the Zionist enemy on the other. The contacts are aimed at reaching a formula which will enable the Jordanian regime to have a role in the settlement of capitulation.

BULGARIAN OFFICIAL ARRIVES IN BAGHDAD FOR VISIT

JN171732Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1715 GMT 17 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Baghdad, 17 February--Ivan Prumov, deputy chairman of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers and secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party [BCP], arrived in Baghdad this evening for an official 1-week visit to Iraq.

Prumov said that the aim of his visit to Iraq is to strengthen bilateral relations in the agricultural field, particularly in matters related to irrigation, as well as to get acquainted with the experiment of socialist construction in Iraq.

Prumov was received at Baghdad International Airport by RCC member and Interior Minister 'Izzat Ibrahim, the minister of agriculture and agrarian reform and the minister of irrigation.

Discusses Cooperation

JN192103Y Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Feb 78 JN

[Text] 'Izzat Ibrahim, RCC member and president of the Higher Agricultural Council, received this evening the Bulgarian delegation under Ivan Prumov, secretary of the Central Committee of the BCP.

Ibrahim briefed the guest delegation on agricultural experiments, and the basic agricultural (?policy) in Iraq. He also briefed the delegation on irrigation, land reclamation and animal husbandry projects and the possibility for Bulgaria to participate in their implementation. The two sides also reviewed cooperation between the two countries in implementing high-productivity projects.

The RCC member also expressed Iraq's readiness to grant Bulgaria preferential treatment in the field of implementing agricultural projects in Iraq.

Prumov expressed his admiration of the agricultural projects he visited and stated that they will play a prominent role, not only in developing Iraq's economy, but also in developing the economies of the Arab homeland.

Prumov expressed Bulgaria's readiness to participate in agricultural projects in Iraq and to transfer agricultural technology to Iraq.

The meeting was attended by Latif Nusayyif Jasim, minister of agriculture and agrarian reform; 'Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud, minister of irrigation; Dr Sami Nawfal, member of the Higher Agricultural Council; Hisham Sabri, under secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform; and the Bulgarian ambassador in Baghdad.

Discussions Continue

JN201404Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1230 GMT 20 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Baghdad, 20 February--Latif Nusayyif Jasim, Iraqi minister of agriculture and agrarian reform and chairman of the Iraqi side to the joint Iraqi-Bulgarian committee, discussed here today with a Bulgarian delegation led by Ivan Prumov, secretary of the BCP Central Committee, the means to develop cooperation between the two friendly countries. During the meeting, which was attended by the members of the Iraqi side and the Bulgarian ambassador in Baghdad, Jasim stressed to Prumov the significance of the serious and fruitful work to implement the agricultural projects which the Bulgarian side is conducting in Iraq. Prumov noted his country's desire to implement new agricultural projects and develop animal breeding in Iraq.

PDRY INDUSTRY MINISTER ARRIVES IN BAGHDAD 18 FEB

JN190711Y Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 0400 GMT 19 Feb 78 JN

[Text] 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Wali, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the United Political Organization-National Front, minister of economy and industry and acting planning minister in the PDRY, arrived in Baghdad last night heading an official delegation on a visit of several days to Iraq.

'Abd al-Wali told INA that he will hold consultations with Iraqi officials on recent developments in the Arab region, the Horn of Africa and the Arab Gulf. He will also hold discussions on Iraq's contribution to the implementation of development plans in the PDRY. 'Abd al-Wali pointed out that his visit is an extension of PDRY Prime Minister 'Ali Nasir Muhammad's recent visit.

'Abd al-Wali praised Iraq's aid to the PDRY and said: This emanates from the status and strength of the relations which link the two fraternal countries [words indistinct] the victorious march of the Arab nation.

In his statement, 'Abd al-Wali stressed the need for the unity and cohesion of the progressive forces in the Arab homeland to defeat imperialism and Zionism.

The visiting delegation was received by 'Adnan al-Hamadani, member of the RCC and minister of planning; several officials; and the PDRY ambassador in Baghdad.

Meets With Husayn

JN191706Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1635 GMT 19 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Baghdad, 19 February--Saddam Husayn, vice chairman of the RCC, today received a letter from 'Ali Nasir Muhammad, prime minister of the PDRY, concerning bilateral relations and the Arab situation. The letter was delivered by 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Wali, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the United Political Organization-National Front, minister of industry and acting minister of planning in the PDRY, when he met this evening with Mr Saddam Husayn.

During the meeting, which was attended by RCC member and Minister of Planning 'Adnan Husayn and the PDRY ambassador in Baghdad, the two sides discussed the relations between the two countries and the means to strengthen and develop these relations in the interest of the Arab cause.

Received by Planning Minister

JN191320Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1310 GMT 19 Feb 78 JN

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 19 February--'Adnan Husayn, RCC member and planning minister, met here today with PDRY Minister of Industry and Planning 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Wali. During the meeting they discussed cooperation between Iraq and the PDRY in the field of planning and the possibility of Iraq's contributing to implementing development plans in the PDRY.

MINISTER RECEIVES LETTER FROM OMANI COUNTERPART

JN201116Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1105 GMT 20 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Baghdad, 20 February--RCC member and Interior Minister 'Izzat Ibrahim has received a letter from Interior Minister of the Sultanate of Oman Muhammad ibn Ahmad. The letter was delivered by Omani Ambassador in Baghdad Musallam ibn 'Ali ibn Salim, when Ibrahim received him today. During the meeting they discussed relations between the two fraternal countries and the means to strengthen them in all fields.

CROWN PRICE HASAN SENDS CONDOLENCES TO AS-SADAT

JN191630Y Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 19 Feb 78 JN

[Text] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, has sent a cable to Egyptian President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat in which he expressed his condolences and those of the Jordanian Government and people on the martyrdom of the great thinker Yusuf as-Siba'i, who contributed greatly toward enriching our contemporary Arab culture and defended our just Arab cause through his thoughts and writings.

AR-RA'Y COMMENTS ON ATHERTON'S RETURN, ANSWERS DAYAN

JN210700Y Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 21 Feb 78 JN

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "With Atherton's Return," the newspaper AR-RA'Y writes in its editorial today: U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Alfred Atherton has returned to the area, and reports say that one of the objectives of the talks he will have is to expand the scope of the negotiations by providing a base for them with a declaration of principles allowing other sides to participate in the process. Meanwhile, Menahem Begin's cabinet held a lengthy, stormy session yesterday to discuss the question of settlements in the occupied Arab areas without reaching any result. Although the Israelis are not optimistic, due to the Egyptian president's adherence to Carter's formula announced in Aswan on 4 January, Dayan still insists on saying that Jordan's absence is the real obstacle to the progress of the talks. Thus there is emphasis on dragging Jordan into the vicious circle created by Israel's insistence on not withdrawing from the occupied Arab areas and its constant denial of the Palestinian people's rights, which have brought the negotiations to a conclusion, just as they were beginning, by pushing them into a deadlock. What is the use of Jordan's participation in the negotiations at a time when Israel does not respect the legitimate rights of the Palestinians--the formula which Carter announced in Aswan? And on what basis can the scope of the negotiations be expanded at a time when the Israeli Cabinet--although split between supporters of settlement in the occupied Arab areas and those who call for suspending settlement temporarily--agrees that more than 100 Israeli settlements will remain in the occupied Arab areas?

Is it a comedy or a melodrama which Alfred Atherton comes to see acted out in the Menahem Begin government's theater? Or is it a Jewish court to which Atherton comes to hear the defense witnesses on Begin's claims that settlement "in the land of our forefathers" does not contradict international law, despite Washington's opposition? Despite everything that is going on and despite the labyrinths which the Israeli maneuvers are leading to, we find someone claiming that Jordan, by not participating in the negotiations, constitutes an obstacle to their progress. Progress in what direction? And what kind of peace does Israel want when it insists on imposing the policy of the fait accompli on the Arabs and constantly denies the Palestinian existence in terms of land and people?

SUSPENSION OF AL-AKHBAR RESCINDED; NO REASON GIVEN

JN180946Y Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18 Feb 78 p 2 JN

[Text] Amman, Feb. 17 (J.T.) --The decision of the military governor to suspend the AL-AKHBAR daily Arabic newspaper which was reported in national news roundup in Friday's JORDAN TIMES was rescinded late last night. No reason was given for the change of decision which was originally taken because of AL-AKHBAR's contravention of instructions by the authorities not to publish advertisements for foreign job vacancies without prior permission.

SARKIS, MINISTERS MEET TO DISCUSS SECURITY SITUATION

NC2018237 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 20 Feb 78 NC

[Text] The president of the republic held a working meeting with Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss this morning. The meeting was later joined by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign and Defense Minister Fu'ad Butrus. Prime Minister al-Huss said after the meeting that a general review of the security and political situation in the country was made. Some of the subjects on the agenda of the cabinet meeting scheduled for Tuesday afternoon were discussed. Minister Butrus said the results of the general review of the situation are reassuring and call for continued efforts to achieve positive results.

LEBANESE PAPERS EXPECT CABINET TO RESIGN SOON

JN1809387 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0850 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Beirut, 18 February--The newspaper AN-NAHAR today says that it expects that the Lebanese Cabinet will resign shortly and that a political cabinet will be formed to undertake the task of national accord. Quoting sources described as well informed, the paper says that the expected formula of accord might be announced next week during the cabinet session. The paper points out that the announcement of the formula depends on the current contacts and efforts to contain the aftermath of the bloody clashes in Lebanon.

Reporting on the same issue, the newspaper AS-SAFIR says that Salim al-Huss's cabinet is actually living in an atmosphere of resignation because, as the paper put it, it does not want to shoulder the responsibility of carrying out the resolutions that may be adopted by the security court which is handling the crimes of the rightists who have so far failed to abide by government policy. The paper says that the cabinet considers itself unable to take action or to make progress as long as politicians continue to hamper its work and to plant mines in front of it. The paper says that one of the formulas submitted proposes that the present cabinet be broadened by adding 14 political figures as ministers.

LIMITED CENSORSHIP IMPOSED ON FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS

NC1813057 Paris AFP in English 1250 GMT 18 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Beirut, Feb 18 (AFP)--Lebanon today imposed limited censorship on foreign correspondents, citing what it termed a recent incident of "undue" coverage. The director of national security, Faruq Abu al-Lam', said the ban was aimed at controlling reports that could hurt reconstruction efforts and jeopardize public order. Foreign correspondents were told that they themselves should submit any such stories by telephone to security officials before sending them. Asking cooperation during what he termed a "difficult phase" for Lebanon, Mr Abu al-Lam' said if limited self-censorship failed he would return to a formal system for all news.

The incident that triggered today's notice took place Thursday when newsmen gave wide coverage to a rightist allegation that Syrian peacekeeping forces were planning to carry out "genocide" in Christian areas of Beirut. The allegation, by a spokesman for the National Liberal Party, was later disavowed and denied by party leader Camille Sham'un, who also heads the rightist "Lebanese front."

Lebanon imposed censorship in January, 1977, shortly after the end of the 19-month civil war. Since then curbs on foreign correspondents have been gradually relaxed.

Before today's announcement correspondents merely had to file copies of their stories with the censors after sending them.

APP REPORTS ON PLANS FOR NEW 'POLITICAL' GOVERNMENT

NC191107Y Paris AFP in English 1028 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[By Muna Nabaa]

[Text] Beirut, Feb. 19 (AFP)--The recent clashes between Syrian troops and Lebanese rightists, whether accidental or planned, have paradoxically opened the way to a dialogue among the various rival Lebanese factions whose positions were hitherto seen as irreconcilable. Consultations appear to be well underway with the aim of achieving a "national consensus" on a programme supported by all political groups. This would be implemented by a "political" government which could either consist of the present cabinet, with a few minor changes, or an entirely new team drawn mainly from young politicians.

The formula has apparently been approved by Syria, where today the ruling Ba'th Party newspaper AL-BA'TH emphasised the importance for the Lebanese of reaching "a national consensus to guarantee the country's unity and the construction of an Arab Lebanon without fanaticism". Last week a Lebanese conservative delegation went to Damascus to discuss the situation created by the fighting in east Beirut. The move was seen as an effort to prepare the ground for negotiations to end tension in Lebanon.

Walid Junblatt, leader of the Lebanese Socialist Progressive Party and of the Druze Moslems, was also "absent" for a few days during which he is believed to have gone to Damascus. Mr Junblatt is frequently cited as a probable member of the future government. Yesterday a delegation of the conservative National Liberal Party [NLP] led by Dany Sham'un, chief of the party militia, went to Damascus to settle problems arising from the involvement of NLP militants in the recent fighting. Meanwhile, Lebanese Prime Minister Salim al-Huss had a meeting yesterday with several members of the government to prepare a reshuffle or the formation of new cabinet, reports SAI.

According to the Lebanese daily LE REVEIL today, the United States has given Lebanese conservatives assurances that the Syrian troop reinforcements deployed in certain parts of Lebanon last week were not a sign of ill-will. The paper said these assurances were given to conservative leader Pierre al-Jumayyil by the U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Richard Parker. The envoy said that talks between Washington and Damascus had shown the Lebanese has nothing to fear from the reinforcements. After his meeting with Mr al-Jumayyil, Mr Parker reportedly said the United States would aid in promoting a positive evolution of friendly relations between Lebanon and Syria while helping the Lebanse Government at the same time.

The Syrian daily AL-BA'TH today criticised the enemies of Lebanon, in particular Egypt's President Anwar as-Sadat, who, it said, was plotting against Lebanon and Syria. AL-BA'TH said President as-Sadat "is seeking to refuel the Lebanese crisis". It said the restoration of peace in Lebanon "does not suit many people both inside and outside the borders of this country". The daily said Syria would support the Lebanese and would spare no effort to help President Ilyas Sarkis preserve Lebanon's territorial unity and its Arab character.

DAMASCUS RADIO REPORTS ON AS-SIBA'I ASSASSINATION

JN181711Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Nicosia--An urgent dispatch by AFP from Nicosia says that the two gunmen who took a group of hostages today and killed Yusuf as-Siba'i, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cairo publishing house of AL-AHRAM, are currently at Larnaca airport near the capital. They are expected to leave Cyprus by air for an unknown destination. AFP adds that the gunmen agreed to release two hostages. They are Dr Lissaridhis, the Cypriot Socialist leader and deputy chairman of the AAPSO, and Cypriot Interior Minister Veniamin.

AFP also reports that the crew members of the Cyprus Airways airliner refused to transport the two perpetrators of the incident with their arms. Meanwhile, president of the Cypriot House of Representatives Mikhailodhis is negotiating with the gunmen in an attempt to persuade them to release the rest of the hostages, estimated at 15, most of whom are Arabs. It should be recalled that the two gunmen attacked the Hilton Hotel in the Cypriot capital of Nicosia and shot and killed Yusuf as-Siba'i and seized many hostages.

Kiprianou Contacts Al-Asad

JN191537Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1515 GMT 19 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Damascus--At 1400 today President Spiros Kiprianou of Cyprus contacted President Hafiz al-Asad by telephone and presented the problem of the hijacked Cypriot plane since the hostages on board are Arabs, including Syrians, Palestinians, Egyptians and others. President Kiprianou suggested as a solution to the problem for the plane to be permitted to land at Damascus, provided that the two hijackers would surrender to the Syrian authorities. The latter would then deliver them to the PLO.

President Kiprianou said that he had contacted Yasir 'Arafat and that the chairman of the PLO Executive Committee agreed to receive the two hijackers.

Out of his desire to save the plane's passengers and crew, President Hafiz al-Asad responded to the request of the Cypriot president. It was agreed that the plane would land at Damascus airport and that the two hijackers would be delivered to the PLO once they had surrendered. President Kiprianou expressed his thanks and gratitude for this kind response.

It is understood that the hostage passengers are two Syrians, one of them Dr Mustafa Haddad, the president of Damascus University; four Egyptians; three Palestinians, one of them 'Abd al-Muhsin Abu Mayzar, member of the PLO Executive Committee; and one passenger each from Sudan, Morocco and Somalia. This is in addition to the plane's crew.

DAMASCUS REPORTS FAILURE OF EGYPTIAN OPERATION

JN200520Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0415 GMT 20 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Cyprus--As-Sadat's operation of piracy at Larnaca airport yesterday failed utterly. The members of the Egyptian special force were arrested by the Cyprus National Guard. It was also announced that the Egyptian forces sustained up to 12 dead and 15 wounded. These figures are expected to go up when the situation clarifies.

According to reports, the members of the Egyptian special force numbering about 100 men landed from the military transport plane which brought them from Cairo and began firing in all directions, including the control towers where the Cyprus president and a number of government officials were. The clash expanded between the Egyptian special force and Cyprus National Guard troops. Heavy arms were used. The Egyptian military plane was hit and caught fire. During the counterattack launched by the Cyprus National Guard, members of this guard managed to release the hostages, despite the confusion. The two armed men in the plane also surrendered to the Cyprus guard, and 20 minutes later a cease-fire took effect.

A number of members of the Egyptian force then took refuge in the eastern part of the airport building. Thirty-eight members of the Egyptian force surrendered on the spot, including four officers, one of whom is a lieutenant colonel. The others showed readiness to surrender to the Cyprus National Guard through the Egyptian ambassador.

Seven members of the Cyprus National Guard were wounded in the clashes. One journalist was also wounded. The Cyprus president lodged a strong protest with the Egyptian Government against the surprise attack on Larnaca airport and ordered the members of the Egyptian force to surrender unconditionally.

According to an urgent report, the Egyptian Government expressed strong disappointment and asked the Cyprus Government for permission to send an Egyptian plane to Larnaca airport to take back the Egyptian prisoners. The Cyprus Government did not announce its reply to this request during the meeting held yesterday. According to reports, the Egyptian government is threatening military intervention, should the Cyprus Government refuse to hand over the Egyptian prisoners.

ELF DENIES INVOLVEMENT IN NICOSIA TERRORIST ATTACK

TA181518Y Paris AFP in English 1514 GMT 18 Feb 78 TA

[Text] Damascus, Feb 18 (AFP)--The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) today denied that its members were involved in an attack in Nicosia in which the Egyptian head of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization was killed and hostages were taken.

An ELF spokesman, responding to a report from the MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY in Cairo that four ELF members were involved, said that ELF had "never, in its 7 years of struggle, committed any such acts." Tekle Ezaz, an ELF high official, was in Nicosia to represent the movement at the AAPSO conference, the spokesman said.

ELF Message to Kiprianou

TA191921Y Paris AFP in English 1909 GMT 19 Feb 78 TA

[Text] Damascus, Feb. 19 (AFP)--The Eritrean Liberation Front today asked Cypriot President Spiros Kiprianou to authorize members of the ELF delegation to the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization to leave Cyprus "freely." An ELF message to Mr Kiprianou, made public today in Damascus, asked the Cypriot president to allow ELF delegation members to leave the island "now that the nationality of the assassins of Yusuf as-Siba'i has been established." A foreign press report had said that Eritreans took part in an attack on the Nicosia Hilton yesterday in which Mr Siba'i was shot dead and hostages were taken from the AAPSO conference. The report was not confirmed.

AL-ASAD, DELEGATION ARRIVE IN MOSCOW FOR VISIT

JN201738Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 20 Feb 78 JN

[Excerpts] President Hafiz al-Asad, secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, and the members of his delegation arrived in Moscow today on an official and friendly visit at the invitation of the CPSU Central Committee, the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium and the Soviet Government.

At the head of those who met the president at Moscow airport, which was bedecked with Syrian and Soviet flags, were Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee; Premier Aleksey Kosygin; a number of senior Soviet officials; heads of diplomatic missions in the Soviet Union; and representatives of trade unions.

President Hafiz al-Asad is accompanied by a government and party delegation made up of 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Comrade Yusuf al-As'ad, member of the Regional Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party; Comrade Nabih Hassun, member of the party Regional Command; 'Umar as-Siba'i, minister of communications; and Ahmad Iskandar Ahmad, the minister of information. The delegation was joined by Jabr al-Kafri, Syrian ambassador in Moscow.

The official talks between the Syrian and Soviet sides are scheduled to begin tomorrow morning in the Kremlin.

Moscow Reportage on Visit

For Moscow reportage of the visit by Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and a Syrian delegation to the Soviet Union, see the Middle East & North Africa section of the 21 February Soviet Union DAILY REPORT.

AL-BA'TH: SYRIA TO DEFEND PEACE IN LEBANON

JN192125Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1930 GMT 19 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Under the headline "The Consolidation of the Peace March in Lebanon Is in the Interest of All," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says:

Beirut is currently witnessing intensive political activities aimed at preparing the atmosphere for the continuation of the march of peace and security, which has taken big strides and helped the legal authorities under President Sarkis bypass many difficulties. The political activities are also aimed at regaining the peaceful atmosphere which disappeared from Lebanon for 2 years. These activities are the results of the efforts of the Arab deterrent forces with the close and fraternal cooperation of the Lebanese authorities.

From the very beginning, Syria, under President Hafiz al-Asad, realized that the peace march might face certain obstacles, some of which might be the result of irresponsible attitudes inside Lebanon. These irresponsible attitudes, wittingly or otherwise, help the enemies of Lebanon and the Arab nation, who are still trying to return fraternal Lebanon to chaos and instability. These enemies seem to still believe that they can, in one way or another, revive their plot, which is aimed at Lebanon or at this country, which defends the future of the Arab nation. Arab Syria under President Hafiz al-Asad realized the dimensions of this plot in 1975 and fulfilled its duties for the sake of Lebanon and the Palestinian resistance and in order to foil the plot completely.

Syria still takes the same attitude and will continue to do so. Syria will not allow anybody to damage the security measures which have been persistently demanded by the Lebanese people, who have been suffering for the past 2 years. The desire of all the Lebanese people to consolidate the peace march was shown by the popular and official satisfaction with the measures taken to contain the recent fabricated incidents involving the Arab deterrent forces, and with the establishment of the joint security court to punish those who attempted to abuse the peace march. This peace march came about through the cooperation between the Lebanese authorities and the Arab deterrent forces.

Undoubtedly, the consolidation of the peace march has caused concern to certain people inside and outside Lebanon, especially those who did not like the steadfast Syrian stand in the face of the plots being hatched against the Arab nation, whether through Egyptian ruler Anwar as-Sadat or others.

Now, after the containment of the recent incidents, Beirut is witnessing intensive political activities. Lebanese sources say that these political activities are aimed at consolidating the peace march through measures which will insure this consolidation and then prepare the atmosphere and pave the way for a national detente which will insure the integrity of Lebanon and the construction of an Arab Lebanon free from fanaticism. The fraternal country should play a prominent role in our struggle with the Zionist enemy.

As President al-Asad has said time and again, Arab Syria believes that Arab causes are one and the same. Arab Syria, he said, will always be at the side of Lebanon and will always work for every Arab cause. Syria will never stop any help it can give to safeguard the integrity and Arabism of Lebanon through complete cooperation and coordination with the Lebanese legal authorities under President Sarkis. As long as Syria and the Lebanese authorities realize the causes of the disturbances in Lebanon, they will not allow anybody to trifle with the peace march or to endanger those who are responsible for this peace. In this lies the interest of Lebanon, Syria and the Arab nation.

KHADDAM ASSERTS SOLIDARITY OF CONFRONTATION FRONT

JN201718Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 20 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Damascus--'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, asserted in a statement published today in the Algerian paper EL MOUDJAHID that the front of steadfastness and confrontation has laid the groundwork for the struggle to confront the imperialist-Zionist conspiracy against the Arab nation. Khaddam added: The Algiers summit conference was able to reach a consensus on all the questions faced by the Arab nation.

Khaddam explained: A just peace, as viewed by the front of steadfastness and confrontation, must be based on a general withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and the guaranteeing of the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people. Khaddam emphasized that the Algiers summit was very determined to maintain Arab solidarity and to use this solidarity in the interest of the pan-Arab objectives.

ALGERIA

AIRPORTS INSTRUCTED NOT TO RECEIVE HIJACKED PLANE

LD191252Y Algiers Domestic Service in French 1200 GMT 19 Feb 78 LD

[Excerpt] Authorized Algerian sources make it clear that all Algerian airports have received instructions not to receive the hijacked DC-8 of Cyprus Airways.

In the past, for strictly humanitarian reasons and successively in each case on the request of the governments of the United States, Austria and Japan, Algeria has given its assistance to remove any peril threatening human lives. Certain Western chancelleries, supported by mass media, always with ill intentions toward Third World countries, have not hesitated to falsify the facts and present international public opinion with versions that were dishonest and false. Thus, Algeria has since decided on a constant attitude toward such incidents. This attitude, over and above legitimate obligations we have toward our own citizens, is not to provide aid and assistance except on the explicit request of duly empowered international authorities, such as, for example, the UN secretary general, the international institutions in charge of the regulation and control of air traffic or world organizations with a humanitarian purpose.

In any case, although Algeria is profoundly touched by the fate of the hostages and concerned about the plight of the human lives involved--all the more dear in that they are innocent--the APS AGENCY is in a position to make a categorical denial of the dispatches from news agencies sent from Nicosia and Djibouti and obligingly repeated by certain radios concerning Algeria's readiness to receive the Cypriot DC-8 in this precise case.

LIBYA

AS-SADAT LOSES ALL RESPECT AS RESULT OF LARNACA

LD201208Y Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1025 GMT 20 Feb 78 LD

[Text] Tripoli, 20 February--The JANA political editor has commented on the recent Egyptian violation of the sanctity and sovereignty of Cyprus. He writes: Not a single day passes without As-Sadat providing new proof that he is a madman who has lost all his senses. Daily he creates acrobatic dramas that confirm his madness, aimed at diverting attention from his failure both internally and externally.

The political editor affirms that the aggression against the sovereignty and sanctity of Cyprus, that small country with friendly people who have supported and continue to support the Arab stands at all international conferences, is an unparalleled crime. In fact, this incident would have taken place in another airport or another country had the Cypriot plane landed there. This is because President as-Sadat now sees in the Israelis his sublime ideal and he emulates them after having capitulated completely to them. It was no accident that Israeli television was the first to carry reports of the mad adventure of the As-Sadat government before all the world information media. This can only mean that the operation was carried out in complete coordination between the Israelis and the government of As-Sadat.

One cannot think how As-Sadat will explain and justify this scandal which is added to his continuous flood of scandals. What will he say to the Egyptian people to justify the killing of their soldiers and sons whom he pledged not to send abroad until the liberation of Sinai but whom he sent as aggressors against the Arab and African brothers, and whom he now sent to Cyrpus to die in an act of aggression which is a sign of madness, irresponsibility and the loss by As-Sadat and his government of all respect and prestige in the Egyptian, Arab and international fields?

ASH-SHAHATI: AS-SADAT WILL BRING WAR TO HORN

LD191536Y Tripoli JANA in English 1427 GMT 19 Feb 78 LD

[Text] Paris, February 19, JANA--Head of the Foreign Liaison Bureau Ahmad ash-Shahati said here yesterday that the policies of Egyptian President as-Sadat will lead to war on the African Continent. He told a press conference, attended by Arab and French journalists, As-Sadat's intervention in the Horn of Africa was adding fuel to fire. He strongly denounced this intervention. Ash-Shahati stressed that, as result of As-Sadat's failure to achieve peace in the Middle East, he is asking for American arms to further subdue the African Continent.

SOVIET-LIBYAN COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING JALLUD VISIT

For a Tripoli voice of Arab Homeland report of the text of the joint Soviet-Libyan communique issued following the Moscow visit of Libya's Jallud, see the Middle East & North Africa section of the 21 February Soviet Union DAILY REPORT.

MAURITANIA

ARMY LEADERSHIP CHANGES IN MAURITANIA, MOROCCO

PA191505Y Paris AFP in English 1418 GMT 19 Feb 78 PA

[Text] Nouakchott, Feb. 19 (AFP)--Mauritanian President Mokhtar Ould Daddah has appointed a new armed forces chief of staff, Lt Col Mustapha Ould Mohammed Salek, it was officially announced today.

Lieutenant Colonel Salek will replace the former Defense Minister Col Mbarek Ould Bouna Moctar, who becomes armed forces inspector general. Lieutenant Colonel Salek, in his fifties, has commanded since July last year the country's third military region, incorporating the central Mauritanian cities of Chinguetti, Atar, Ouadane and Akjoujt.

Meanwhile, reports from Algiers said King Hassan of Morocco has also reorganized his army leadership "following the discovery of an opposition movement within the army in the Western Sahara." (Algeria gives political and military support to the Western Sahara guerrilla movement POLISARIO, which is fighting Morocco and Mauritania, who split the former Spanish administered region between them under an agreement with Madrid).

The Algerian daily AL CHAAB said the reorganization was designed to "remove officers whose loyalty to the throne was doubtful and to finalize a plan to invade Algeria pretexting the right of hot pursuit of Sahara revolutionaries."

POLISARIO GUERRILLAS ATTACK IRON-ORE TRAIN

PA211302Y Paris AFP in English 1226 GMT 21 Feb 78 PA

[Text] Nouakchott, Feb 21 (AFP)--A 30-vehicle Saharan military column attacked an empty iron-ore train between Nouadhibou and Zouerate in northern Mauritania late last night reliable sources said today. The attack took place 165 km from the Atlantic port of Nouadhibou where the ore from the Zouerate mining complex is unloaded for export.

The reports said there were no casualties either among the Mauritanians or the guerrillas of the Algerian-backed POLISARIO Nationalist Front. Traffic along the railway has been momentarily halted, according to a spokesman of the Mauritanian State Industrial and Mining Firm. The Saharan guerrillas have adopted a night-time attacking strategy over recent weeks to escape air raids by French Jaguar aircraft, sources in Nouakchott said.

DAYAN DISCUSSES U.S. POSITIONS, POLITICAL ISSUES

TA171724Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1505 GMT 17 Feb 78 TA

[Interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan by station correspondent Dan Shilon, in Washington on 17 February]

[Text] Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan ended a visit to the United States today. During the visit Dayan met with President Carter, Secretary of State Vance and the heads of the U.S. administration. The U.S. visit, a visit that partially overlapped with President as-Sadat's trip, was held in the shadow of harsh U.S. statements condemning the settlements in the territories and the decision to sell modern fighter aircraft to Egypt and Saudi Arabia. After the meeting with President Carter, our correspondent Dan Shilon talked with Mr Dayan. [Begin recording]

[Question] Do you, after the meeting with President Carter, feel that the differences of opinion between Israel and the United States have been settled to a certain extent?

[Answer] We did not deal with the differences of opinion. As a matter of fact, the initiative for the meeting was his and the content of the meeting was the continuation of the peace negotiations with Egypt and everything pertaining to them. We did not deal with the specific questions of settlements or [word indistinct]. We did not deal with the arms handed over to the Arabs, but with the political issues and the continuation of the negotiations.

[Question] What is the next step then, in the light of this meeting?

[Answer] Technically, the next step is the arrival of the State Department representative, Mr Atherton, in Israel next week in order to continue the negotiations. I assume--I do not know, I just assume--that the work of the Israeli-Egyptian Military Committee will be resumed. Around this, essential questions of formulations, commitments and so on will, of course, arise.

[Question] Do you believe that there is in fact a recession in the relations between Israel and the United States?

[Answer] There are undoubtedly a few things which are not only bones of contention between them and us, but which are also hard, even very hard, for Israel. The three most outstanding are, in my opinion: the matter of the sale of arms and fighter aircraft to Arab countries, especially to Saudi Arabia; the matter of settlements and the U.S. remarks on this matter, their timing and the connection in which they were made; and their repulsive sensitivity regarding a withdrawal, a withdrawal on all fronts. The specific point which is most difficult here, in my opinion, concerns the West Bank, Judaea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

[Question] Is it possible to halt, at least to some extent, the U.S. aircraft deal with Egypt and Saudi Arabia?

[Answer] I do not know. Defense Minister 'Ezer Weizman will be here in 2 weeks and will handle this. I do not know.

[Question] The question of settlements has been defined by you, in your trip throughout the United States, as a question subsidiary to the major question, the West Bank question. Still, the impression here in the United States is that rather great importance is attached to the matter of settlements. Do you, at the end of your trip, feel that you have made Israeli arguments persuasive?

[Answer] I do not know, but I am sure that what I have not done, then time and the facts.... [sentence as heard] Already now, it is clear that the main question that makes difficult the continuation of the negotiations between Egypt and us is Jordan's absence from the negotiations. The chief difficulties causing a lack of progress in the negotiations are not the disputed questions, the questions of settlements and the questions connected with the Sinai such as the airfields, demilitarization and so on, but the basic fact that Egypt says--this is apparently how it feels--that it cannot make a separate peace with us without Jordan. Jordan does not want to come without an Israeli commitment to a total withdrawal--of new and old settlements and army forces--and without recognizing the right of the Palestinian Arabs to an independent state. This is the main obstacle.

[Question] Your visit here almost coincided with the visit of Egypt's president, Anwar as-Sadat, and the impression, if it is possible to use a generalization, is that he was greatly convincing to U.S. public opinion. Can you point out where is the soft belly, in quotation marks, of the Israeli position? Is it expressed in substance, in information or maybe in a different element?

[Answer] I think that our soft belly, if we use this expression, is in the fact that an unexpected turning point has occurred on the part of the Arabs. After decades an Arab leader rose, came to Jerusalem and wants peace, says that he wants peace--it does not matter whether he wants, or must have or needs peace. This is the point, the change in [word indistinct]. The fact that the Israelis want peace is no novelty. It has been read and written and said for 30 years. All of a sudden, an Arab leader, and not just any leader but Egypt president, comes, enters a grave conflict with the other Arab countries and the Soviet Union, and so on. In addition, he also makes demonstrative, theatrical, dramatic steps of traveling to Jerusalem. Well, then, this undoubtedly impresses, not only the Americans but also us, the Israelis, including me. Had I been told a few months ago that this is what would happen, I would not have believed it. This has indeed happened. Our soft belly then is not against the background of the difference between the Israeli and Egyptian positions. Where does the blame lie? With us--but against the background of the Egyptian position as compared with the Arab position prevailing throughout the years. An extreme change has indeed occurred in this.

[Question] In all your speeches here you practically called on King Husayn to join the negotiations without preconditions. If he indeed does so, do we have something to offer him?

[Answer] What I have said is not a call upon Husayn but a statement of our position. Israeli cannot, nor does it have to, make concessions on the basis of some sort of an apparently advance surrender without preconditions. King Husayn is sitting on the East Bank and notifies us, in a royal announcement, that we must agree to everything in advance: to a withdrawal, to a Palestinian state and so on, and then he will come or negotiations. Well, I do not reject his demands for a withdrawal, for a Palestinian state and for everything he wants. He can make proposals just as we make proposals, but during negotiations. I totallyreject his demand, a demand that may be supported by others, As-Sadat and possibly others too, that we undertake in advance to satisfy Husayn's desire so that he will agree to come and participate in thenegotiations. This is not a call on Husayn but a declaration of our position: we are ready to discuss these subjects but not to give any Israeli commitments in advance, as he wishes. In the negotiations we will either agree or disagree.

[Question] In the framework of the discussion, will we have something to offer him?

[Answer] In the framework of the discussion, our initial proposals, Israel's peace proposal, in my opinion, is extraordinarily farreaching, since it is, in advance, something that we have not done before. It speaks of an independent administration for the Arabs. In simple terms, they will run their own lives, except for the matter of defense. They will run their lives and we will leave them alone in this. We announce in advance, [words indistinct] of Begin that the sovereignty issue remains open. We do not demand Israel's sovereignty in this settlement and of course, we do not agree to Jordanian or Palestinian sovereignty. If anyone from the other side raises this subject, we will also raise it. However, these two points coming at the very beginning, letting them run their lives as they want, in other words leaving the question of sovereignty open as a basis for the negotiations, in this sense, and the fact that he can come with his own proposals--in my opinion, this is an entirely proper basis [for negotiations.]

[Question] Sir, thank you. [end recording]

WEIZMAN INTERVIEWED ON U.S. STEPS, TIES WITH EGYPT

TA1720322 Jerusalem Domestic Television Service in Hebrew 1820 GMT 17 Feb 78 TA

[Interview of Israeli Defense Minister 'Ezer Weizman by military correspondent 'Amiram Nir--date and place not specified, recorded]

[Text] The crisis in relations between Israel and the United States has preoccuped us this week. The differences of opinion between Washington and Jerusalem, especially on the question of settlements, have been overshadowed by the triangular aircraft deal. In the middle of the week, the United States announed that it is selling 50 F-5E's to Egypt, 60 F-15's to Saudi Arabia and to Israel: 15 F-15's and 75 F-16's. Besides the defense dangers inherent in this deal from the Israeli point of view, it seems to be a dangerous political precedent in the range of relations between us and the Americans. Defense Minister Weizman believes that the decision on the deal, in the midst of delicate and complex negotiations and without using this deal for the purpose of advancing the negotiations, constitutes a grave mistake on the part of the United States. Our military correspondent 'Amiram Nir interviews Defense Minister Weizman about the airport deal, about the U.S. role in the negotiations and about mistakes made by both Egypt and Israel over the last few months. [begin videotape]

[Question] Mr Weizman, does the supply of U.S. aircraft to Egypt and Saudi Arabia endanger Israel's security?

[Answer] Endanger? I would not use this word. I would say that this loads us with problems. Sixty F-15's to Saudi Arabia and 50 F-5's to Egypt--this is undoubtedly something that we should take into consideration. Moreover, I would suggest that we tackle the problem not through the number of aircraft, but through the fact that the United States has apparently decided to be an influential element in the armaments sphere in the Middle East among those countries which are pro-American. The political point of view may be far more important than the very existence of U.S. aircraft in the area, for all the importance this subject has from the defense point of view.

[Question] What is the reason, in your opinion, for this U.S. strategy, for this U.S. shift?

[Answer] The answer is very simple: The Soviets are out and the Americans in. We are faced with some problem, some dilemma here. I think that every Israeli would prefer U.S. to Soviet influence in the Middle East. I would prefer that everyone leave us alone. However, this is not the way the world operates.

After the Soviet departure from Egypt, with all the reasons and developments involved, and their nonentry, thank God, into Saudi Arabia, the United States, I believe, decided to enter the Middle East more intensively and exert influence. To our great regret in modern times entering a place means that you usually ride either an aircraft or a tank.

[Question] Is it, in your opinion, worthwhile for us to try to stop the arms deal with Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the light of this dilemma?

[Answer] Believe me, this is a question I have asked myself at least 50 times. I do not know whether it is possible to stop it. I would say though that we should consider this deal in the light of the entirety of our current contacts with Egypt. We have forgotten somewhat and ignored a bit the fact that we find ourselves in a situation that has never before existed. For 3 months now we have been in close contact with the Egyptians. I say that it could be worthwhile for us, for the Israeli Government, to see how this subject of the U.S. entry on aircraft--and I hope it will not be on tanks the day after tomorrow--can affect the components of peace, if peace is established, between us and the Egyptians.

[Question] In other words, the strategy you are suggesting that Israel adopt is that since it is impossible to prevent the aircraft deal, Israel should at least take advantage of it for purposes which are positive for us.

[Answer] I did not say this exactly, but I would suggest considering also this fact: If we do not succeed in stopping the deal, we cannot, generally speaking, run and cry out that we have been wronged all the time. One should also remember that today we are also riding U.S. aircraft, U.S. equipment and major U.S. aid. The chiefly negative element of this U.S. move is that we have been brought into a package deal. In this deal, if we use this not nice word, we also receive 90 aircraft, an extremely important 90 aircraft. I think that the flaw in the U.S. move is that it was made in the midst of the talks between us and the Egyptians, and also, that it overlooked the fact that we had been promised a number of planes as a result of the 1974-1975 agreement. We have been led into a package deal from which I would have gotten out if I could, since we are being put together with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. This constitutes the greatest flaw.

[Question] Looking back, was it possible to prevent this package deal before it took place?

[Answer] I do not like being an activist retroactively. It is hard to tell this now. I at least was not surprised by the fact that the Egyptians and Saudis are getting aircraft. I do not think that others were surprised either. We knew that this was going to happen. I repeat, I think that the flaw, the negative element in this move--among the other facts of the existence of U.S. aircraft, strength and modern technology all the elements that doubtlessly constitute a danger--I view as the greatest flaw and negative element in this mistaken, in my opinion, U.S. move, the fact that the Americans found it right to make this decision in the course of hard, not simple, negotiations; negotiations that have practically reached a certain crossroads upon As-Sadat's recent moves to dismantle the Jerusalem committee. I think that this is an issue that will carry implications for the talks between the Egyptians and us.

[Question] The problem is, Mr Weizman, that when you retrospectively try to examine the developments in the region since Ismailia, the impression gained is that Israel is always being dragged after others' moves and the initiative in fact slips out of our hands. How is this?

[Answer] I do not think this is so. In negotiations you are the one who drags, the one who is dragged and so on and so forth--this changes from time to time. I may be repeating something that I said before: For 30 years we have waited for a situation in which we would have contacts with the Arabs. We are having contacts with the largest country, with Egypt. These are difficult contacts, with numerous mistakes, theirs, and we too might have made some imprecise turns. I think that a huge effort must be made so that this thread we have got hold of after 30 years does not fall from our hands. It is possible that we should now enter from a different direction and with a different intensity. I have no doubt that the U.S. move will influence some thoughts that we have had in the military committee regarding the way we view the settlement in the Sinai. This has given us new and different thoughts. This may or may not aid the negotiations but it will surely not fall in the category of us being the one who is dragged, as you put it.

[Question] When you say different thoughts--could you go into detail? Does this, for example, mean the seizures [tefisa] of the airfields in the Sinai?

[Answer] I will not go into detail because, first, I have not yet summed up with my team what the final significance is. Generally, I suggest to many friends of mine that when there is such a U.S. entry into the Middle East, with new aircraft, I do not think it is possible to examine all the implications very quickly. We are now working on this in the general headquarters and the Defense Ministry. We are now working on all aspects of the general implications of the U.S. entry into the Middle East with arms, and of the entry of modern aircraft into the region. There is no doubt that the airfields in the Sinai are one of the components. On the whole, if today we have to reach an agreement with Egypt in possession of this or that power, this will surely affect the course of the negotiations. Therefore, I think that the Americans have made a mistake in their move by not thinking of integrating it into a possible settlement between us and the Egyptians.

[Question] Mr Weizman, in general, does the basic assessment of the situation prevailing in Israel 2 or 3 months ago--namely, that As-Sadat is prepared to go for a peace settlement between Egypt and Israel even at the expense of moderating the definitions regarding the Palestinians, Judaea and Samaria, and so on--does this assessment still hold true? Do you still believe in it?

[Answer] Basically yes. I do not believe but assess--this is not a matter of beliefs but of assessments based on information, on reports and knowledge--that As-Sadat wants peace, but only according to his own conditions. If it is according to his conditions, as they are now, this will not be implemented. The question is whether, upon entering renewed negotiations--and I hope we will do so--we will have things to talk about. I hope we will. Therefore, basically, the assessment of the situation has not changed. I reiterate what I have said before: I believe that the Egyptian people want peace. I believe and assess that the Israelis want peace, that the people residing in Zion want peace. If there are two such forces, the way will be found.

[Question] When you left Egypt the last time, it was concluded that you would return there after As-Sadat's visit to the United States. What is delaying you?

[Answer] The thing that is delaying me first and foremost is a government decision. We have to discuss things, we have to wait for the foreign minister who is returning today and hear a report about what happened there.

Certain things that have occurred also changed the assessment of the situation, in other words, the prime minister is going to depart for the United States. Therefore, I may or may not leave before my and the prime minister's trip to the United States. I suggest that things should not be pushed or speeded up.

[Question] Mr Weizman, is it possible to make progress from the starting position adopted by both parties on the settlement issue in your last meeting with your Egyptian colleague?

[Answer] I think so.

[Question] Is there no need for a change in approach?

[Answer] I have answered you once already. Negotiations are always made up of this or that approach. If you insist and press on this question, I hope that I am not saying something accidentally that I should not, but the government has decided to hold a discussion on the entire issue of settlements and policy since we have arrived at a certain road, we have reached a certain situation. A discussion will be held next week on the entire problem and subject and the interesting, serious and important issue of settlements in all parts of Eretz Yisra'el.

[Question] Mr Weizman, has the problem of settlements perhaps been put in too high a tree so that it is difficult for both the Israelis and the Egyptians to climb down from it now?

[Answer] I do not know whether it was put high or low. The one who climbed up also knows how to climb down. The subject, I repeat, is complex and will be raised for discussion in the government next week.

[Question] Mr Defense Minister, can you look back at the last 3 months and sincerely say that Israel has conducted the peace negotiations in the most proper, best manner both from the strategic and tactical points of view?

[Answer] I think that the manner has been handled basically correctly. I will not evade the issue and say that no errors have been made. Errors have been made. I think that big mistakes have been made on the other side. I think that the basic problem--and I have said it before--I think that As-Sadat wants peace. I am not defending or attacking him but I will only say something that I said to him when I saw him in Aswan 5 weeks ago--that, from his point of view, the move that he made was apparently a huge move for him, a move that forced him to make great efforts. He therefore reached the conclusion that since he did such a thing, everyone should follow him in everything, that he--I would say--dictates. There was quite a bit of dictation on his part. If he indeed wants to come to negotiations, he cannot insist on the things to which he adhered in the initial position of the negotiations. If he is intransigent on them, these are not negotiations but a dictate. The mistake of the Egyptian president was that he did not understand the current mood in Israel. I estimate that he has made several mistakes over the last months including the cessation of the Jerusalem Committee. Nevertheless, I am not saying that we were perfection incarnate and have not made a few mistakes.

[Question] Mr Defense Minister, there is a feeling today of deadlock, maybe of frustration and maybe also of disappointment. Where are we progressing from now, in your opinion?

[Answer] I do not think that a mood of frustration should prevail. I do not think that there should be a mood of joy.

We are in one of the most complicated situations in which the State of Israel has ever found itself. On the other hand, I repeat, the first time, 30 years after the establishment of the state, we have contacts with an Arab country and I suggest that we do not let this slip from our hands. At any rate, we, with the help of the United States, despite all the mistakes--and I believe that the last move was a mistake and a mistake that we will continue to hear about--we should now strengthen ourselves, organize and think very thoroughly about how to pick up this initiative begun 3 months ago and move it forward in order to reach an agreement with the Egyptians.

[Question] Is the situation in which we find ourselves now the same as you anticipated 3 months ago when As-Sadat arrived in Jerusalem?

[Answer] To tell the truth I anticipated a worse situation. I did not believe that we would attain what we have. If you had asked me 2 months ago, namely, a month after, I thought that we would be in a better situation. From this one can learn that there are ups and downs in negotiations taking place after 30 years of bloody wars. Those who thought that it was possible to reach a settlement in weeks, in months or in days were mistaken. However, to become pessimistic, to get moody, I think that we still have a long way to go. I would not say that joy should prevail but certainly not pessimism.

[Question] Thank you. [end videotape]

The defense minister kept quiet and did not go into detail regarding our correspondent's questions about the mistakes made by Israel.

BEGIN: FRIENDS IN CONGRESS TO FIGHT AGAINST U.S. ARMS DEAL

TA191307Y Jerusalem POST in English 19 Feb 78 p 2 TA

[By Asher Wallfish, Knesset reporter]

[Text] Premier Menahem Begin said on Friday that Israel's friends in the U.S. Congress will campaign vigorously to dismember the arms package deal.

He told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee that important congressmen will do whatever they can to remove the link between aircraft sales to Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Begin said there were already some indications that the administration might eventually be persuaded to reconsider the package idea, although it was too early to prophesy.

The premier said that criticism inspired by official circles in Washington that Israel's peace plans had been unilaterally altered between Begin's meeting with President Jimmy Carter in mid-December and the Ismailia conference, was unfounded. The minor points changed in the peace plans had all been conveyed to Carter before Ismailia, Begin said.

He quoted from the relevant documents and promised that copies would be deposited in the files of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee tomorrow for perusal by members at their convenience.

He said that the U.S. administration had never before used such sharp expressions as now to decry the settlements in the areas, although its displeasure with the settlements was a matter of record. "The grave U.S. statements for the first time described the settlements as an obstacle to peace," he said. He added later that Israel had not violated any commitments to the U.S. on the settlements issue.

President Anwar as-Sadat improved his position as a result of his talks in Washington, Begin added. The U.S. is now taking as-Sadat's side, and promising him arms for the first time, because it is translating a political viewpoint into political action, Begin said.

Begin said that American Jewry stands solidly behind Israel. The reports about Philip Klutznik's call for U.S. pressure should be forgotten, he suggested, now that Klutznik maintains he had been misunderstood.

During the discussion, in which some 10 members of the committee took part, the alignment assailed Begin over the Rafah area, contending that Israel's standing had been damaged in U.S. public opinion because the "strengthening" projects were launched in the midst of the negotiating process. Abba Eban said that the government's political programme had proved bankrupt.

Replying to points in the discussion Begin said that his coalition and its alignment predecessor had different interpretations of UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967.

Whereas the alignment had envisaged withdrawal on all three fronts Golan, Judaea and Samaria, and Sinai), Begin said, the Likud-led coalition envisages a near-total withdrawal in Sinai matched by no withdrawal in Judaea and Samaria. The best rejection of alignment criticism, he believed, is that the Arab states are no more ready to offer peace on the Alignment's terms than they are on the Likud's terms.

The next stage of the negotiating process will come tomorrow, when U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton is due in Jerusalem with the Egyptian response to Israel's proposal for a draft declaration of principles, Begin said.

OFFICIALS AMAZED BY CARTER STATEMENTS ON SAUDI ROLE IN CONFLICT

TA191316Y Jerusalem POST in English 19 Feb 78 p 1 TA

[By Hirsh Goodman, military correspondent]

[Text] Officials in Israel last night expressed "amazement" at President Carter's statement that Saudi forces never actively participated in fighting against Israel.

They point out that in the 1973 Yom Kippur war the Saudis sent to the Golan a mechanized infantry brigade, which fought in the Tel Mari region and suffered casualties. The brigade remained on the Golan Heights after the war and took an active part in the subsequent war of attrition [as published] there between Israel and the Syrians. It was only withdrawn in 1976.

The Saudis also dispatched armoured forces to Jordan in 1967 and again in 1973--when during the Yom Kippur war they bolstered Jordan's line with Israel south of the Dead Sea and allowed Jordan to release its 40th armoured brigade for active duty on the Golan.

The sources also point out that Saudi Arabia in 1973 ordered 38 Mirage V fighters from France--planes which it then transferred to Egypt, thus contradicting another part of Carter's reasoning.

BEGIN SENDS CONDOLENCES ON AS-SIBA'I ASSASSINATION

JN190706Y Jerusalem in Arabic to Arab World 0530 GMT 19 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Prime Minister Menahem Begin has sent condolences to the Egyptian Government and to the As-Siba'i family on the assassination of Yusuf As-Siba'i.

In a statement to journalists in Jerusalem, the prime minister said that the world should consider the assassination of As-Siba'i as evidence of the nature of sabotage organizations.

DEBATE ON SETTLEMENT POLICY CONTINUES TO BUILD

Zionist Organization Plans

NC190824Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[From the Morning Newsreel]

[Text] A plan for increasing the number of settlements in the Jordan Valley, by adding 14 settlements and farming units to the existing ones, has been completed by the Settlements Department of the Zionist Organization. Our correspondent Shim'on Schiffer notes that the heads of the department expect to begin implementing the plan in the coming months by paving roads, drilling for water and establishing military posts on the sites designated for settlement. Prof Ra'anan Weitz said that from the political point of view, this is the plan that should be implemented at this time, and not the plan for establishing settlements in densely populated areas in Judaea and Samaria. More details are contained in the following report: [Begin recording of Shim'on Schiffer]

In the coming months, the bulldozers of the Jewish National Fund, which have become the symbol of accelerated settlement activities, will make their way to the Jordan Valley. Last weekend, a plan for the establishment of 14 settlements along the Jordan Valley was completed by the Settlements Department of the Zionist Organization. It can be said that this constitutes the department's answer and that of its leader, Ra'anan Weitz, to Minister Ari'el Sharon's ideas on settlements, which call for Jewish settlement in Judaea and Samaria. Ra'anan Weitz hopes by this plan to stop Ari'el Sharon and the establishment of settlements in areas densely populated by Arabs. Professor Weitz told me yesterday that this plan is yet another phase of the concept of settlements along the Jordan Valley that has been implemented in the past 10 years; settlements in an area without villages which will constitute a security buffer zone along the Jordan Valley. The settlements will be established in three [as heard] areas along the valley: in the region of Argaman, in the region of Nahal Ro'i along the Allon Road, in the region of Na'aran and Gilgal, and in the south of the valley near Kibbutz Almog. The planning team, headed by Mikha Efrati, has consulted with sources in the Israel Water Authority, which has already planned drilling in the area of the new settlements.

It was reported from the Settlements Department that the money to implement the plan has been allocated. The team that prepared the plan has been working at it for 2 months, and now the question remains whether approval will be granted by the government.

The cabinet will convene tomorrow to discuss the question of settlements. Yesterday, Defense Minister 'Ezer Weizman met with a committee representing settlers in the Rafah approaches, and according to them, he reiterated that the settlements there are essential to Israel's security. It should not be ruled out that the Cabinet could adopt firm decisions that are different from those it has adopted in the past on this delicate question. [end recording]

The chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Settlements, Agriculture Minister Ari'el Sharon, refused to give any details on this plan.

Jewish Agency Plans

TA192117Y Jerusalem Domestic Television Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 19 Feb 78 TA

[Text] The Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency proposes to establish 57 new settlements over the next 5 years, 31 of which will be beyond the green line. This proposal is included in the rural settlement program that will be submitted to the Zionist congress this week. Our correspondent for settlement affairs, Yig'al Goren, remarks that the proposal includes the establishment of 17 new settlements in Judaea and Samaria. This, however, does not include the Gush Emunim settlements spread along on the back mountain slopes, despite the fact that the Settlement Department already takes care of some of these settlements.

In an explanation of the new settlement program it is stated that the policy regarding the establishment of new settlements is to give priority to sparsely populated regions and regions with climatic advantages for the growing of export produce. Therefore, the Settlement Department also proposes to establish 15 additional settlements in the Rafah region and 21 settlements in the Golan and the Galilee.

Begin: Israel Keeping Promise

TA191505Y Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 19 Feb 78 p 4 TA

[By Yehoshu'a Bizor]

[Text] Prime Minister Menahem Begin confirmed, in a session of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee on Friday, that Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan promised, on one of his latest visits to Washington, that during the coming year no new settlements would be established in the territories, nor any footholds. Begin stressed that the Cabinet is acting on that promise.

The prime minister made these remarks in reply to severe criticism of the continuing settlement of the territories by Alinement and DMC representatives on the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. Knesset members Abba Eban and Yosi Sarid of the Alinement faction, as well as Shemu'el Toledano of the DMC faction and the secretary general of MAPAM, Me'ir Talmi, claimed that serious damage had been done by the demonstrative acts of settlement in the territories, activities which represent an obstacle to negotiations for peace, which have unnecessarily caused us complications with the United States and have even helped the maneuvers of President as-Sadat.

Prime Minister Menahem Begin replied by saying that nothing done in the territories had violated the guarantees given to the United States. He even quoted from the minutes of his talk with President Carter, during his visit to the White House, in which Carter said that he did not find any reason for President as-Sadat not to accept the peace program that Prime Minister Begin proposed to Carter and which included leaving the Israeli settlements in the Rafah approaches under Israeli administration.

Begin added that there is a group of Gush Emunim people at Shilo and it had been made clear to them in advance that the purpose of their presence there is only to undertake archeological diggings. He expressed his regret over the fact that the Gush Emunim people had said on television that they are not there for archeological research. In Mr Begin's view, this had been a grave mistake which has caused us serious damage. The prime minister emphasized that there is only an archeological camp at Shilo and that this will continue to be the case for as long as the Cabinet does not give its authorization for the establishment of a settlement on the spot.

MK Abba Eban asked the prime minister where settlements would remain in the future. Mr Begin replied that the Cabinet would discuss this matter this week and would make a decision. Mr Begin did not explain, but it is the impression of members of the committee that the Cabinet is about to make a decision to stop the settlement activities over the coming period.

On the issue of the supply of aircraft--in the form of a package deal--by the United States, Mr Begin said that in fact the issue has to do with the fulfillment of prior commitments given to us in 1975. What the U.S. Administration is offering us is not everything that was promised at that time, Mr Begin stressed.

Weizman To Seek Policy Change

TA191419Y Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 19 Feb 78 p 1 TA

[By Yona Shimshi]

[Text] In a discussion to be held this week on the settlements, with the aim of determining a clear policy on this matter for both domestic and foreign consumption, a proposal will be raised to consider the possibility of changing the Cabinet decision on the matter of the settlements in Sinai.

This proposal is intended to permit progress to be made in the Egyptian-Israeli Military Committee talks, if and when the talks are resumed.

The discussion on the settlements will apparently be held in the Ministerial Committee for Security Affairs and two proposals will be raised there. Defense Minister 'Ezer Weizman leads those demanding that a text be agreed upon which will permit Egypt to make a peace agreement with Israel. Leading the opposing camp is Agriculture Minister Ari'el Sharon, who is demanding that no change be made in the Cabinet's declared positions on the matter of the settlements and that decisions be taken to strengthen the settlements.

In addition to the discussions in the Ministerial Committee for Security Affairs, the differences of opinion will apprently also be expressed in other political forums which are divided on this issue.

It has been learned that Defense Minister 'Ezer Weizman thinks that if Israel does not bring new proposals on the issue of the settlements, there is no point to a renewal of the Military Committee's talks. It is also clear that the defense minister will demand more emphatically that Egypt should permit Israel to retain the airfields in Sinai for a longer period than that previously mentioned in the talks between the two countries. In the defense minister's view, this should be demanded against the background of the supply of U.S. aircraft to Egypt.

Labor Party Views

TA191651Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1600 GMT 19 Feb 78 TA

[Text] The government will convene tomorrow for a special Cabinet session to deal with the problem of settlement in the territories. With this in mind, the Labor Party has called on the government to avoid demonstrative acts and unnecessary declarations. The announcement by the Labor Party reaction team states that such acts and declarations cannot serve any positive goal and they may severely damage the peace negotiations and Israel's credibility.

Herut Group Views

TA192018Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 19 Feb 78 TA

[Text] In view of the discussion to be held in the Cabinet tomorrow about the settlement issue, the circle of those loyal to the principles of the Herut Movement sent a telegram to the prime minister in which they express the hope that the government will decide immediately to make the right to settle a fact. It is said in the telegram that such a decision is the only answer to a U.S.-Egyptian dictate and to the supply of arms to Israel's enemies.

Mk Ge'ula Kohen, one of the leaders of the circle, stated that the circle members will hold a rally the day after tomorrow in a demonstration of solidarity with the settlers in Samaria.

Yadin Remarks Noted

TA201613Y Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1510 GMT 20 Feb 78 TA

[From the afternoon newsreel]

[Text] Here is an item that has just reached the desk. Deputy Prime Minister Prof Yiga'el Yadin said today that he is acting for the adoption of a resolution in the Cabinet to freeze settlements. Professor Yadin, who was speaking at a DMC faction meeting today, said that he does not oppose the settlements in principle but in view of the political reality in which we find ourselves there is no choice but to freeze.

The deputy prime minister added that the DMC ministers are creating a climate in the government that also enables ministers such as the minister of defense to express their opinion in favor of a freeze on settlements.

Special Cabinet Session

TA201324Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 20 Feb 78 TA

[Text] In Jerusalem the Cabinet session ended about half an hour ago. It lasted about 5 and 1/2 hours. The Cabinet sat as the Ministerial Committee for Security Affairs. In the official announcement it was reported that the Cabinet began with a political debate and, within this context, the question of the settlements in Eretz Yisra'el was discussed. The discussion has not yet been concluded and it will continue on Sunday. Nearly all Cabinet members attended the debate but it was necessary to end the debate in order to permit the ministers to take part in the opening ceremony of the Zionist Congress in Jerusalem.

Our political correspondent Shalom Qital reports that 10 ministers participated in the discussion, including the prime minister, the defense minister, the minister of agriculture and the foreign minister.

After the session Mr Begin explained that the session had been necessary since political problems had accumulated in connection with the settlements as well. In reply to a question by our correspondent about differences of opinion in the Cabinet, Mr Begin said that this is a democratic cabinet and that differences of opinion in it are natural. He expressed the hope that the conclusion of the debate, on Sunday, will have the agreement of all the Cabinet members.

Cabinet 'Clash' Avoided

TA210657Y Jerusalem POST in English 21 Feb 78 p 1 TA

[By Asher Wallfish and David Landau]

[Excerpt] Differences of approach on the settlement issue were pointed up at a special Cabinet meeting yesterday, a few hours before U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton flew in to resume his shuttle negotiations between Israel and Egypt. But the Cabinet majority will favour moderation, and will probably decide on a moratorium on new sites for the duration of the peace talks, according to informed sources.

Premier Begin called the meeting for a wide-ranging review of the situation at this stage of the peace-making process.

Despite the differences between ministers, which Premier Menahem Begin termed "natural in a democratic Cabinet," officials said that predictions of a clash between hard-liners, led by Ari'el Sharon, and moderates led by 'Ezer Weizman, were not borne out.

Defence Minister Weizman stressed repeatedly that Israel's supreme goal must be peace, and that settlement programmes must dovetail with this objective and not obstruct it.

Both Weizman and Agriculture Minister Sharon came to the meeting carrying maps, which they each referred to during their presentations. The maps are understood to have depicted both the West Bank and the Rafah area.

Informed sources said the 5-hour debate proceeded "without recriminations or overt personal animosity."

Almost all the ministers asked to take part in the debate, but yesterday only 10 of them had time to do so, and Begin has therefore decided to hold a second session on Sunday.

The premier told newsmen yesterday that he hoped the Cabinet would publish a unanimous resolution on Sunday winding up the discussion. The premier himself spoke only briefly yesterday and is reserving his own position until all of his colleagues have spoken. He will presumably seek to strike a unifying chord between the disparate views.

Informed sources said that ministers had not split into two distinct and feuding factions, but rather had each presented his own independent assessment of the best course to be taken in the negotiations and the wisest settlement programme.

Additional impetus towards moderation on settlements could build up between now and Sunday if Assistant Secretary Atherton appears to be making progress in his efforts.

DAYAN EXPLAINS REMARKS ON ISRAELI AID TO ETHIOPIA

TA181721Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700GMT 18 Feb 78 TA

[Text] Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan said that he was not the first to announce Israeli aid to Ethiopia, an announcement he made in an interview to Swiss Television. Talking to our correspondent, Sara Frankel, the foreign minister said that even before his arrival in Switzerland, reports on this matter had been published in the world press and, when asked about this in the interview, he was faced with the problem of either denying, confirming or evading the question. The foreign minister said that he preferred giving a true answer to giving an evasive reply in order not to give the wrong impression that Israel is extending large amounts of aid to Ethiopia.

Mr Dayan told our correspondent that if asked he will reply in the Knesset to the opposition demand that he clarify his remarks. In addition, if he is asked about this in the Cabinet session he will also clarify his remarks there.

Knesset Member Demands Resignation

NC191309Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Knesset Member 'Eqiva Nof, of the DMC, has called for the resignation of Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan. This is because of his public statement that Israel was selling arms to Ethiopia. In an urgent motion to the agenda, Nof charges that the foreign minister's statement was not coordinated with the government and had caused great damage to the State of Israel.

Begin Comments on Remarks

TA172210Y Jerusalem Domestic Television Service in Hebrew 1820 GMT 17 Feb 78 TA

[Text] A group of Knesset members received clarifications from the prime minister today about Foreign Minister Dayan's remarks regarding Israel's aid to Ethiopia. Our correspondent Dan Raviv reports that from the prime minister's reply it was understood that the publicity for the Israeli aid to Ethiopia, given by the foreign minister, had not been coordinated and approved in advance. Mr Begin said that when the foreign minister was asked the first question about this he did not want to give a false reply. The impression of the Knesset members was that the prime minister is of the opinion that Mr Dayan's remarks constituted a slip of the tongue and the support given the foreign minister by Mr Begin is retroactive.

Knesset Debate Sought

TA181836Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 18 Feb 78 TA

[Text] MK Yosi Sarid this evening submitted an urgent motion to the Knesset agenda, concerning the expulsion of Israeli advisers from Ethiopia in the wake of Foreign Minister Dayan's declaration.

Our correspondent Zevi Lidar reports that in his explanation concerning the motion, MK Sarid says that he knows that immediately after the foreign minister's announcement Addis Ababa authorities ordered all Israelis serving in that country to leave immediately. According to Sarid, he knows that all these Israelis have returned home and thus the cooperation between the two countries, which has lasted for many years, has come to an end. MK Sarid says that he can state that the expulsion was carried out because of the foreign minister's announcement which caused the Israelis harm in several spheres that cannot be publicly detailed.

In his explanation Sarid states that it is inconceivable that any minister who causes such damage to vital interests of the state because of an irresponsible remark should not be required to give a public accounting.

Israeli Firms Suffer

TA210640Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0505 GMT 21 Feb 78 TA

[From the morning newsreel]

[Text] Israeli industry is suffering losses totaling many millions of dollars following the severance of what had remained of the links between Israel and Ethiopia. Dan Eshel's report deals with this:

The step taken by Ethiopia in the wake of Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan's statement to the effect that Israel is supplying security equipment to Ethiopia has led to the cancellation of commercial orders and the expulsion of Israelis from Ethiopia. It is true that not all Israelis have been expelled and it is not yet clear whether the freeze on the commercial orders is final; but the damage has already been done.

In Addis Ababa there was a refusal to confirm that orders from Israeli companies have been canceled for political reasons. The only thing one could ascertain from spokesmen there was that at least one cable was sent saying that an order worth a large sum had been canceled for reasons "not dependent on us;" that is, for noncommercial reasons. We asked the company in Israel but they refused to answer our questions. "We have no people in Ethiopia and we have never had any," so I was told in reply to my question. I learned that this reply was not accurate and we know of at least one other commercial company whose staff is still in Ethiopia.

The cancellation of orders from Ethiopia brings losses of millions of dollars to Israeli industry which was active there. According to reports from Addis Ababa, an order for this year worth hundreds of thousands of dollars has been canceled. Thus, the company will apparently be forced to cancel anticipated equipment sales worth several million dollars for this year. This is a company which over the last 2 years supplied Ethiopia with equipment worth many millions of dollars.

BEGIN REPORTEDLY SUPPORTS UN CONTROL OF GAZA

TA191437Y Tel Aviv HA'AREZ in Hebrew 19 Feb 78 TA

[By Eliyahu Zehavi]

[Text] Copenhagen, 18 Feb--In an interview published in the Swedish liberal paper, EXPRESSEN, Prime Minister Menahem Begin says that if Israel retreats from Judaea and Samaria the PLO will take over there within 24 hours. The prime minister recalled that Israel has been attacked daily from these areas for 19 years.

The prime minister was asked what would happen in the area within another 10-15 years. He replied: "In another 10 years I will no longer be alive. In our area, 20 years is forever." He revealed that, in addition to Israel's agreement to a total withdrawal from Sinai, it had also been agreed that the Gaza Strip should be under the control of UN forces and under a UN flag, although the IDF would be permitted to defend Israeli settlements.

On the misunderstandings between us and As-Sadat, he said that As-Sadat had promised that the Egyptian Army would not cross the Jiddi and Mitla passes; but As-Sadat later changed his mind and said that the main force of the Egyptian Army would not cross the passes.

On the question of settlements in Sinai, Mr Begin admitted that in Ismailia As-Sadat had totally rejected them. It has been agreed that negotiations would be conducted on this issue. "We are prepared for discussions, but we are not prepared to receive an ultimatum," the prime minister said.

Spokesman Denies Report

NC190913Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 19 Feb 78 NC

[Text] The prime minister's spokesman, Dan Patir, this morning explained that there is no foundation to remarks allegedly made by Mr Begin to the Swedish paper EXPRESSEN concerning the stationing of a UN force in the Gaza Strip. The spokesman explained that the prime minister said these things in connection with Israel's plan on the future of the Rafah approaches.

KHALATBARI ANNOUNCES CLOSURE OF NAIROBI EMBASSY

LD181803Y Teheran Domestic Service in Persian 1600 GMT 18 Feb 78 LD

[Text] At a press conference today, Foreign Minister Abas Ali Khalatbari once again emphasized Iran's policy in the Horn of Africa. In alluding to the shah's remarks on resolving differences between the two sides through peaceful means and the search for a solution in this regard, he said: Thus far Iran has not taken any measures against Ethiopia, and the assistance rendered to Somalia has been within the limits of medical assistance given by the Red Lion and Sun Society.

Mr Khalatbari said: The Iranian Government adheres to the principles of its independent national policy, and one of these principles is respect for the recognized international borders of countries. Because of this policy, the Iranian Government has not assisted Somalia against Ethiopia. But if Ethiopia, during the extensive attack which it has begun, invades the recognized borders of Somalia, then the Iranian Government [words indistinct] will not remain indifferent to such an event.

The foreign minister then referred to topics relating to the illegitimate attacks of Kenyan newspapers on our country, and said. We noticed with great surprise and regret that during the last 2 weeks Kenyan newspapers have launched attacks on Iran and have criticized our very clear and peace-loving policy. Of course, we replied to this country's newspapers, and during our contacts with Kenyan officials we requested the latter to enlighten their press on the policy of Iran so that these attacks could come to an end. But regretfully we saw that the Kenyan foreign minister also repeated the same topics of that country's newspapers and attacked Iran and said: Iran is not an African country that it should side with the Africans. It is as if the Kenyan foreign minister was not aware of the presence of non-Africans in Africa and their interference in the affairs of that continent, or else he regards others, who are practically participating in the battle in the Horn of Africa region as Africans.

The Iranian foreign minister referred to the principles of the UN Charter and the importance of the preservation of peace and of the rights of countries in this respect, and said: The Iranian Government, as a founder-member of the United Nations that has always taken an active part in the realization of world peace, holds to its right to express concern when peace is endangered in a part of Africa and its right to emphasize that it will not remain indifferent to aggression against the recognized borders of Somalia.

Our country's foreign minister added: Because a responsible Kenyan official has made such remarks against our country, the imperial Iranian Government has decided to close its embassy in Nairobi--the capital of that country--and we will therefore arrange to close our embassy in Kenya. It is natural that we should consider the (?effect) of the transfer of Iranian interests and their protection in Kenya by one of the friendly countries.

In conclusion, Foreign Minister Khalatbari said that the Kenyan foreign minister has made similar remarks about Saudi Arabia, but the Government of Saudi Arabia has alluded to Somali membership in the Arab League and replied that Saudi Arabia defends the member-countries of this league regardless of their geographical position.

REPORTS CITED ON RIOTS, SITUATION IN TABRIZ

LD182216Y Teheran Domestic Service in Persian 1600 GMT 18 Feb 78 LD

[Excerpts] According to the PANA report, during the riots that took place in Tabriz today by groups of individuals, several places were set on fire and windows of a number of shops were smashed. It had been previously announced that a number of people would hold meetings in mosques and religious places, but as a result of the provocations by some recognized elements who regard themselves as Islamic Marxists, several groups went into the streets, and shouting communist and antinational slogans, attacked shops and banks. Along their way these individuals set fire to a number of transport vehicles. They were eventually dispersed through the intervention of security officials.

The incident in Tabriz today arouses the question in the public mind as to what is the aim of those who set fire to and raided the property of the people and what objective they sought. If the perpetrators of this incident had merely looted the property of the people, we could say that in coveting the property of others, they committed the crimes of theft and looting. But this was not the case. The people of Tabriz today witnessed various types of barbarous invasion of their property. Groups who called themselves Islamic Marxists went into the streets and raided and invaded the people's places of work and business as much as they could, smashing or setting fire to shops. These individuals did not even leave alone the transport vehicles parked along their way and took pleasure in the fires they started.

In addition to law enforcement, the people ask several questions of the government: What sort of people and for what purpose attacked the security, living conditions and progress of Iranian society? Are they saboteurs from the other side of the border, or deceived people who want, in the interest of the dirty greed of the aliens, to halt or delay the rapid movement of Iran's revolutionary society? Who are the enemies of the Iranian cultural organizations? Who wants the Iranian universities and cultural organizations to remain ineffective and backward? The Iranian nation demands clear and precise answers to all these questions.

6 Dead, 125 Injured

LD191515Y Teheran Domestic Service in Persian 1500 GMT 19 Feb 78 LD

[Text] According to a PARS NEWS AGENCY report, 6 people were killed and 125 injured in rioting incited by foreign agents in Tabriz. Rioters attacked 73 banks, cinemas and shops and set fire to a number of them.

During the Majlis session today, the deputies expressed revulsion at yesterday's incidents in Tabriz.

IRANIAN CHIEF OF STAFF RETURNS FROM IRAQ

LD201252Y Teheran PARS in English 1100 GMT 20 Feb 78 LD

[Text] Teheran, 19 Feb, PANA (PARS NEWS AGENCY)--The chief of the Iranian joint command staff, General Gholam Reza Azhari, ended his 9-day official visit to Iraq and returned to Teheran this evening. During his stay in Iraq, General Azhari was received by President Hasan al-Bakr and presented him with a message from His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah Aryamehr regarding friendly relations between the two countries. He also met with the Iraqi defence minister, 'Adnan Khayrallah.

AFGHANISTAN

PRESIDENT DAUD TO LEAVE ON OFFICIAL VISITS

LD191912Y Kabul in Dari to Europe 1230 GMT 19 Feb 78 LD

[Text] The presidential office (?reported) that Mr Mohammad Daud, the president, will leave during the current week on the respective invitations of Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the president of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; Mr Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, president of the People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah; Mr Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat; the president of India; and Mr Fazal Elahi Chaudhry, the president of Pakistan for official and friendly visits to these countries.

NEW VICE PRESIDENT APPOINTED IN AFGHANISTAN

LD201342Y Kabul in Pushtu to Europe 1200 GMT 20 Feb 78 LD

[Text] President Mohammad Daud appointed Mr Seyyed Abdol Elah, vice president, on the basis of Subsection II of Article 78 of the constitution. The presidential office said in its report that the presidential decree on the appointment of Mr Seyyed Abdol Elah as vice president was issued yesterday.

BANGLADESH

ZIAUR RAHMAN RETURNS FROM SYDNEY CONFERENCE 17 FEB

BK171735Y Dacca Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT 17 Feb 78 BK

[Text] President Ziaur Rahman has said that he has discussed wide-ranging subjects, apart from friendly bilateral issues with the various delegations at the regional conference of the Commonwealth heads of government in Sydney. He was talking to newsmen on his return to Dacca a short while ago.

He said he had discussed the question of greater access of products of developing countries to world markets and increased capital flow from richer to poorer countries. The question of food scarcity and the road to achieve self-sufficiency in food were also discussed. Another important topic which figured in the discussions related to the question of alternative energy sources like solar energy. He said so far as Bangladesh is concerned, we have bright prospects of utilizing this energy.

President Zia said the question of debt services and other related matters were also discussed. In fact, the underlying idea of the discussion was aimed at establishing a new order based on social justice and making maximum utilization of human resources.

President Zia expressed happiness over the fact that most of the proposals put forward by Bangladesh were adopted at the Sydney conference and found mentioned in the joint communique. He particularly referred to Bangladesh's suggestion about the creation of a Commonwealth fund and the setting up of a center for dissemination of knowledge. The Bangladesh proposal of upholding the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people was also included in the communique.

President Zia said he had also detailed discussions about involving Australia in a larger way in the development efforts of Bangladesh. The new areas which were identified related to [word indistinct] production, cattle raising, dairy farming and coal mining. The possibility of joint ventures in the setting up of a petrochemical complex in this country was also explored.

The president also had fruitful discussions with the Singapore prime minister while on his way to Dacca from Sydney. He said the question of joint ventures in jute carpets, food canning and shipbuilding were discussed. A high-level official delegation from Singapore will be visiting this country, he added.

The president said he is sending a high-level trade delegation to Singapore to look into the possibility of setting up joint ventures in food canning, shipbuilding and the jute carpetmaking industry.

PRESIDENT ZIA SAYS ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN DECEMBER

BK161605Y Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 17 Feb 78 BK

[Text] General elections will be held in Bangladesh in December. Speaking at a press conference in Singapore today, the Bangladesh president, Mr Ziaur Rahman, said about 19 political parties have been registered for the elections including a new party, the Nationalist Democratic Party. He himself expects to be a key figure in that party.

The Bangladesh president said that his country has improved its relations with India in the past few months. He said that he had talks with Mr Morarji Desai in Sydney.

Earlier in Sydney, Mr Rahman announced that Australia will help Bangladesh in building a petrochemical complex and developing fishing and solar energy.

INDIA

PRESIDENT REDDY ADDRESSES JOINT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

BK200926Y Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 20 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The president has appealed to both the houses of Parliament for their full cooperation in enacting legislation for the removal of the distortions wrought in the constitution by the 42d Constitutional Amendment Act. In his first address as president of the two houses this morning, Mr Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy said a comprehensive bill on the subject has been drafted after detailed discussions with leaders of the opposition parties to restore the constitution to its true form by removing the dark spots. He emphasized that there is a need to build bulwarks against any possible bid in the future to use the constitution itself to negate and subvert the basic principles of democracy.

Mr Sanjeeva Reddy said the people yearn for cleaner politics and cleaner administration at all levels. Unless there is faith in the probity of the holders of high office, the future of constitutional government will not be secure. He said a bill to provide that all members of Parliament should declare their assets, liabilities and business interests will also be introduced by the government. The president noted that the removal of restrictions has been utilized by some sections to indulge in violence, intimidation and sabotage. There has also been terrorism against our personnel and property abroad. He said that while any aggrieved section is welcome to seek redress through constitutional channels, the government cannot permit lawlessness and violence.

Referring to economic matters, Mr Sanjeeva Reddy said that as a result of proper management in the past year, the rate of growth has risen to 5 percent as compared to less than 2 percent in the year before the present government assumed office, agricultural production has made up the ground lost in the previous years, and the production of commercial crops is also much higher during the current year. Inflationary pressures have been checked.

The president said the current level of prices is no higher than what it was at the end of March last. The president said the government is keen that controls and regulations which have outlived their utility should be removed so that the enterprise and initiative of the people have full play in determining economic activity.

Mr Sanjeeva Reddy said that the family welfare program has suffered a setback as a reaction to the excesses committed during the emergency. We cannot afford to allow this trend in this vital matter. He appealed to state governments and the people to assist in achieving the national target in this program. Another subject of vital importance to family welfare is prohibition, and the details of the phased program in this connection are being worked out in consultation with the states.

Turning to foreign affairs, the president said that India has spared no efforts in making our subcontinent an area of peace and cooperation through a series of initiatives in our bilateral relations with the neighboring countries. India's relations with great powers are based on the commitment to genuine nonalinement, beneficial bilateralism and furtherance of constructive international cooperation.

The Hindi translation of the president's address was later read out by the vice president, Mr Jatti. Before Mr Sanjeeva Reddy began reading his address, he remarked in Hindi that he would have loved to address the members in that language rather than in English, but his mother tongue is Telegu and it would be difficult for him to learn to speak proficiently in Hindi at his age.

As Mr Sanjeeva Reddy got up to deliver his address, a senior CPI [Communist Party of India] member, Mr Bhupesh Gupta, protested against what he called the nonfulfillment of the promise about the repeal of MISA [Maintenance of Internal Security Act], but the president asked him to be patient and listen to what he had to say on the issue. In his address, Mr Reddy said that the government had made a thorough review of MISA and a bill has already been introduced for its repeal and for amending the code of criminal procedure.

When the president concluded his address, a Rajya Sabha member, Syed Ahmed Hashmi, rose to complain against the omission of any reference to communal riots.

PAKISTAN

6 PERSONS KILLED IN SECTARIAN CLASHES IN KARACHI

BK210748Y Karachi Overseas Service in English 0030 GMT 21 Feb 78 BK

[Text] A press note issued by the Sind government in Karachi says that 6 persons were killed and 22 injured when sectarian groups clashed in the Golimar-(Nagerbar) area of Karachi yesterday. The press note says the law-enforcing agencies intervened to control arson and to separate the fighting groups. Forty-one persons have been arrested.

The press note further says that law-enforcing agencies are extensively deployed and are keeping the disturbed area under close and constant vigilance.

The Sind martial law administrator has ordered an immediate judicial inquiry into the unfortunate incident.

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